COMING the ROSE

by

Eric Shepherd

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COMING THE ROSE

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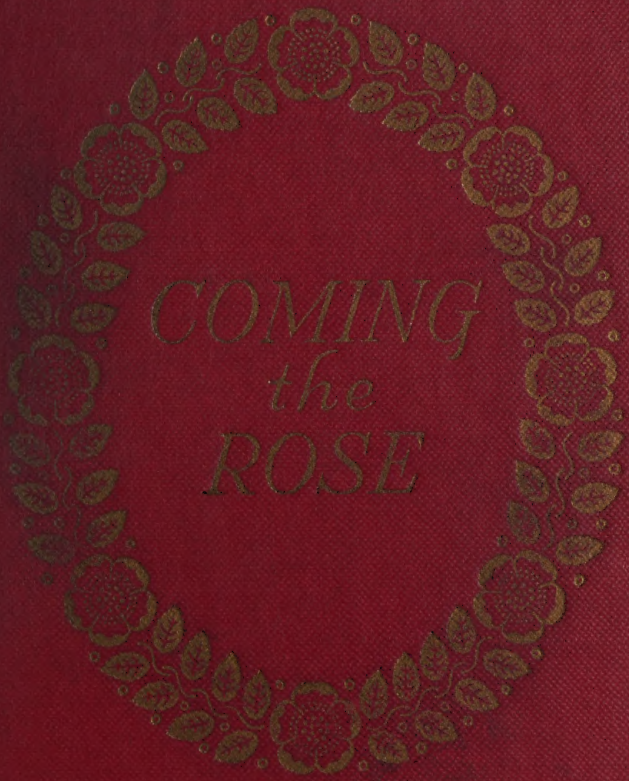
ONCE every few years there comes along a novel which, forsaking the sordid, complicated paths of everyday life, takes the willing reader to Arcady. When, as in this delightful story, it is done by a writer who, in addition to his romantic inspiration, has a rich fund of humor, insight into character, and exquisite style, the result is a volume that its readers never forget.

The three characters of 'Coming the Rose' are a Cambridge professor, a specialist in Roman inscriptions and vintage Burgundies; his daughter, a modern young woman with a very ancient charm; and an ex-student of the professor's, a young man of singular enterprise. These three meet in Avignon, and the action passes in a richly colored atmosphere of moonlit ruins to the song of the nightingale.


COMING
the
ROSE

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COMING THE ROSE

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BY

ERIC SHEPHERD

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TO

AIMÉE

IN CELEBRATION OF AN EVENING IN JUNE

AND A MORNING IN AUGUST

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COMING THE ROSE

CHAPTER I

" Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the swallow,
Swift as the swallow along the river's light
Circleting the surface to meet his mirrored winglets,
Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her flight."

LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

I.

"THERE have been women," the Professor was remarking blandly, "of whom it was . . ."

"Look out, Daddy!" Adorée cried.

The Professor nimbly side-stepped to avoid a motor-trolley which was proceeding with French *élan* along the platform of the Gare de Lyon,—and began again.

"There have been women, my dear, of whom it was . . ."

"Oh, *look* out, Daddy!" Adorée cried again, with greater urgency.

The Professor side-stepped once more, but this time not quite nimbly enough—or else the trolley had more way on it,—for he un-

doubtedly owed it to the presence of mind of a passing young man that he was not run down. Even as it was, the thing shaved the side of his overcoat, so that the contents of the pocket —a litre of white wine, the Professor's invariable and most judicious provision for all-night travelling—was broken.

"Oh, dear!" the Professor sighed, as the wine, which was meant for his palate, soaked through to his legs.

"Hard lines, sir!" said the young man, sympathetically.

The Professor was too much occupied with his legs to look up, but he did not forget his manners.

"Oh, thank you, thank you," he said to the young man. "I am so very much obliged to you. Dear, dear! who would have thought there was so much liquid in a litre!"

The young man, who was apparently English, had half produced a much larger handkerchief than the Professor's, with a view to first-aid; but, as the trolley with its long train of loaded trucks had now passed on, allowing Adorée to reach her father's side, he merely raised his hat and moved away.

"Oh, Daddy," Adorée said, as she mopped

away at the Professor's legs, "how careless of you! What does it matter *what* sort of women there have been—in the very *middle* of the Gare de Lyon? You'll be ever so uncomfortable, darling—unless you change your trousers on the train."

"That might, no doubt, be done," allowed the Professor with philosophy. "But I was thinking," he added, ruefully, "of my good wine!"

At this, the young man, who had remained within earshot, suddenly disappeared.

"France is full of wine," Adorée said. She turned aside to engage in what looked and sounded to her father like a brief but violent flirtation with a high official of the Line. All Adorée's conversations in French gave her father this impression: which simply goes to show what a mastery of the language (and national temperament) that young woman had achieved.

"This is our train," Adorée said at length. "And this nice man"—indicating the high official—"is going to find us our places. Come along, Daddy."

The Professor came along, and, following the 'nice man'—who, so as not to have to

take his eyes off Adorée, hauled himself up backwards into the coach—he and his daughter went in search of their compartment.

2.

When the Professor had anything to say (which was often), he generally contrived to say it, come what would; and a long and wide experience of lecturing had inured him to interruption and enabled him to keep the thread of his discourse in spite of it. No sooner had the 'nice man' taken his leave (which he did with evident reluctance), leaving Adorée and her father comfortably settled in their places, than the latter harked back at once to the remark he had been trying to make when the two trolleys bore down upon him.

"There have been women," the Professor resumed, "of whom it was said that to love them was in itself a liberal education. There are regions of earth likewise of which, in my opinion, the same thing might be maintained, and of such regions our present destination—Provence—is certainly one."

"I do wish, darling," Adorée said reproachfully, "you wouldn't put me off where I'm going by saying such things. (*Dreadful*

creatures those women must have been!) I always thought Provence was a lovely country —full of Troubadours . . . and Petrarch making love to Laura . . . and things like that."

"I do not know, my dear," the Professor rejoined, "that Provence can ever have been said to be *full* of Petrarch. But it was undoubtedly the gracious landscape and early civilisation of Provence which inspired the Troubadours. Moreover, it was certainly at Vaucluse—a beautiful fountain of subterraneous waters, not far from Avignon—that Petrarch sang of Laura."

"Was she *really* so very pretty?" Adorée asked, hunting about in a suit-case for the Professor's 'spare wheel' or alternative pair of trousers.

"It is reasonable, my dear, to suppose that Petrarch thought so. But I cannot understand," the Professor went on mildly, "why my reference to Provence as a liberal education should discourage you."

"You wouldn't, darling! But it does, all the same."

"The Greeks," pursued the Professor, abandoning the former point, "have left their

traces in Provence. Their influence is to be seen to this day in the hair of the women of Arles. . . ."

"Is Daddy mad?" Adorée murmured—apparently to the pair of trousers, which she had just discovered. "What *do* you mean, darling, by saying that the Greeks are to be seen in women's hair?"

"What may interest you even more, my dear, is a Provençal saying to the effect that no woman of Arles is other than perfectly beautiful."

"I don't believe it! You've often told me, Daddy, that the Greeks were awful liars."

"I do not know, my dear, that the Greeks were responsible for the saying in question."

"They must have thought them worth looking at," Adorée argued, "since they went and did their hair for them."

"My dear, I did not go so far as to say that the Greeks actually with their own hands *dressed* the hair of the Arlesiennes, but merely that a fashion of female hair-dressing characteristic of the ancient Greeks is the traditional coiffure even to this day of the women of Arles."

"Well, I don't think much of them," Adorée said, shaking her own shingled tresses, "if

they've never thought of another way of doing their hair in all these years! Just look at the number *we've* thought out—in nothing *like* so long! Now, Daddy darling, here are your other trousers; you'd better go and . . . Hallo!"—adroitly concealing the garments again—"what in the world is this?"

'This,' to judge by appearances, was the train-attendant, who now darkened the carriage-door—if such a smile as his could be said to darken anything!—holding in his hand a bottle of white wine of even finer dimensions (if that were possible) than that which the Professor had recently lost.

"He says," Adorée told her father, after some altercation, "that a Monsieur Anglais asked him to give it to the Monsieur Anglais! Which is which, darling?—I mean, which is the other which?"

"There is certainly some witchery in the affair," the Professor allowed, noting with deep satisfaction that the cork of the bottle had been thoughtfully drawn. Otherwise he appeared, as his daughter noticed, much more concerned with the timeliness of the gift than with the identity of the donor.

"But, darling," Adorée persisted, "you

must surely have some idea who this kind person is ?"

" I shall be able to tell you in a moment, my dear," the Professor said, uncorking the bottle, " whether he is a man of any discernment in wine."

" Well ?" Adorée asked.

" This, my dear," the Professor said, withdrawing the neck of the bottle from his lips, " is undoubtedly the gift of some very superior man indeed. Some very delightful fellow—and, I should say, a person of unusual taste and information—has apparently crossed our path, my dear."

" But why should he suddenly send you a bottle of wine, Daddy ?"

" We can never err, my dear, in such attentions to one another. Besides," added the Professor, " possibly he may have witnessed my misfortune with the trolley."

" Oh yes," Adorée said, beginning to see light at last. " Oh, and, Daddy, didn't somebody pull you out of the way ? Was that a Monsieur Anglais ?"

" I cannot say, my dear."

" But did he speak English, Daddy ?"

" That also, my dear, I cannot remember."

"But, Daddy, did you *understand* what he said? Because if you did, you know, then he *did* speak English!"

"My dear child," the Professor said, "I can only remember that I was very wet, all down one leg—and that the person in question seemed to feel for me very deeply. But whether he expressed his commiseration in English or in some other tongue, that, I confess, has entirely escaped me."

"Aren't you hopeless, darling? I expect the person (whoever it was) saw what a funny old pet you are. Run along and change now, anyhow. I'm going to look out of the corridor-window on to the platform, just to see if I can spot this 'Monsieur Anglais.' What do you think he'd look like?"

"You must look out, my dear," the Professor said, with a smile, "for a countenance of great nobility and refinement. I should judge our benefactor to be above the common height—young, but not raw,—strong, comely in every feature, and with a bearing authoritative but not in the least arrogant or offensive."

"Daddy! I do believe you *know* who it is! Who have you been making friends with, on the sly? Do tell me, Daddy dear."

"My dear child, I merely describe our unknown friend as his gift appears to represent him. This bottle differs from those which are occasionally found floating in the ocean, in that it does genuinely contain a message. . . . Indeed, it is not unlike that found by the fisherman in the *Arabian Nights*—which contained, if you remember, a Genie! I should certainly look out of the window if I were you, and, if you see any outstandingly good-looking young Englishman, by all means ask him into our compartment."

"I mean to," Adorée said; and she passed the time of her father's absence in leaning far out of the corridor-window and scanning the crowd, but with no result, as far as could be known, beyond that of affording unmixed satisfaction to large numbers of her male fellow-creatures.

When the Professor returned at length, considerably more comfortable about the legs:

"Daddy," Adorée said, "do you see all that hand-luggage there on the platform?"

The Professor, who was wearing his near-sight glasses, did not in fact see it very clearly, but, with some trouble to himself, he made the necessary exchange, and closely observed the

objects pointed out to him: which were several serviceable pieces of weather-beaten exterior, and not specially remarkable—unless, indeed, it is always remarkable to be uncompromisingly British.

"Don't you see anything queer about that luggage?" Adorée demanded.

"My dear," the Professor said, "you must regard me as Dr. Watson in matters like this. For myself, I only see several substantial cases, very clearly and legibly directed in block capitals to—er—to . . ."

"Yes, Daddy, that's just the point! They're directed—very clearly and legibly, as you say—to Grenoble!"

"Let us hope they will arrive safely, my dear. Nothing is so inconvenient as to lose one's luggage abroad. But I confess I am still hopelessly in the dark."

"But, darling," Adorée said, "how can it arrive safely? It's directed to Grenoble, and *that's* the train for Grenoble—there, on the other side of the platform! This one is going to Avignon, and they're putting all that Grenoble luggage on to this Avignon train! What's more, they've just hauled it all out of the right train—because I watched them!

Do you think the owner knows? Oughtn't we to tell him?"

"There could be no objection to that," the Professor said, "if the owner happened to pass this way, and if we knew him to be the owner. I think I should assume, however, in the absence of further evidence, that he knows what he is about."

"He must have changed his mind very suddenly," Adorée said. "I wonder what made him? I wish I could see him, but he never shows—only a brown hand which comes through the window and takes the pieces."

"If there is a hand, my dear, you may be quite sure there is a man behind it—with a brain and purpose directing his movements, strange as they appear to us. Perhaps, in some temporary absence of mind, he wrote Grenoble in mistake for Avignon. . . . Undoubtedly such things *do* occur."

"Yes, darling, they *do*, *don't* they?" Adorée agreed. "But all the same," she went on, "I believe that *that* man meant Grenoble when he wrote it. Look at the big black letters! I *do* wonder what made him change his mind! . . . It's almost as mysterious as your bottle of wine, Daddy."

"And that reminds me . . ." murmured the Professor, and he re-entered the compartment.

Adoree, tired of looking out for the 'Monsieur Anglais' with the effusive habit of bestowing bottles of wine on perfect strangers, soon followed her father.

"Well, good-bye, Paris!" she said, kissing her hand as the train began to move. "And now, Daddy "—curling herself up very snugly on her side of the carriage—"begin and tell me all about where we are going. I bet if the Greeks did the women's hair, the Romans combed the men's for them! I believe I used to know quite a lot about it all, once, when I was at school." Her tone in referring to this period of her life rather suggested that it was about contemporary with the events to be narrated, whereas the truth was it had but ended a year ago.

"Shall I turn out the light while I talk?" the Professor said, as he tenderly and efficiently covered his daughter up. "You might drop off to sleep if I did so."

"But won't you want to read, Daddy?"

"No, my dear, I think not. I have read a good deal in my time, and now I really prefer

just to sit and think. I have my bottle of wine, my pipe, and the consciousness that I am travelling swiftly and comfortably to one of the most beautiful countries in the world. I should be a very poor sort of philosopher if I were anything but perfectly contented."

"*Darling!*" Adorée murmured, already sleepily.

CHAPTER II

" Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath her,
Press her parting lips as her waist I gather slow,
Waking in amazement she could not but embrace me:
Then would she hold me and never let me go?"
LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

I.

"THERE is no reason in the world," Peter Archer was telling himself, further down the train, "why I should not go to Avignon instead of Grenoble *if I like* !"

As he communed thus with his conscience, he looked hard and challengingly at the old French lady opposite. But she was occupied in smearing the whole of a *petit Suisse* on to a piece of bread, preparatory to engulfing both, —and took no notice of Peter.

"The very essence of a holiday," Peter told himself sententiously, "is perfect freedom to do exactly what one likes, according to the mood of the moment. Schedules, time-tables, fixed plans—these are anathema to the holiday spirit, properly understood. There is a true sense," he argued on, his eye still on the old lady, "in

which it is strong-minded to be weak-minded on a holiday."

The old lady opposite opened her mouth very wide at this. At any rate, she opened her mouth very wide . . . and posted the bread and cheese. There was something derisive, however, in her manner of doing it, which suggested to Peter that she had divined his sophistries, and spurned them.

"My dear lady . . ." he began, reasoning with her. But there was something unanswerable, as he felt, in the way she crunched.

"I don't care what you think," Peter defied her. "You are elderly—even old; and the fires of life are extinguished in you. 'Crabbed age and youth'—as Shakespeare finely puts it—'cannot live together.' *Shakespeare, Guillaume*," he explained, for the benefit of the old lady; "*poète et penseur anglais—bien célèbre!*"

"Crump, crunch!" retorted the old lady.

"Mastication, Madame," Peter reproved her, "is not argument. Besides," he went on, "Avignon is incontestably a more interesting town than Grenoble. Once you have looked at the mountains at the latter place . . . and what remains to do? Answer me that, dear lady! Whereas at Avignon there is the Palace

of the Popes, a monument of practically inexhaustible interest; and—and a landscape positively littered with Roman remains. These are considerations for a man of education and taste. Can you wonder, *chère Madame*, that even at the last moment I preferred Avignon?"

"Crunch!" commented *chère Madame*. Most of the bread and cheese had by now passed down her throat, and it seemed to Peter that repletion was mollifying her.

"Ah, dear lady," Peter continued, much encouraged, "I knew that once your woman's scrupulous correctness was overcome, your woman's heart would sympathise. She *is* rather a little darling, isn't she——? And you see, I happened to find out that they are going to Avignon! Advise me, dear lady, from your long and wide experience. What would you have me do?"

"Pop!" said the old lady. She had uncorked a small flask of cognac.

Peter sighed and shook his head.

"Your advice, dear Madame," he said, "jumps entirely with my inclination, but it takes too little account, alas! of things as they are—of the world as it is! . . . 'Here where men sit and hear each other groan!' *Keats*,

Jean," Peter groaned, "*poète romantique anglais*. It was not the time, dear Madame—not the place! 'Never the time and the place, and the loved one, all together!' I can't remember the author of that just at the moment," he apologised, "*mais anglais, chère Madame—anglais . . . et si vrai! Ah, si vrai!*"

"Glug-glug!" said the old lady. She was absorbing the cognac in sips.

"Don't be vulgar," Peter objected, much shocked. "I couldn't think of it. We do these things differently in England. Besides, she had her father with her. . . . (Incidentally, is the old gentleman her father, or her grandfather?) In England, Madame," he admonished the old lady, "we can't love anything half so much, love we not honour more! Remember that!"

"Zip!" said the old lady. She had corked the flask again.

Peter felt the finality in her tone and understood that she wished to be persecuted with no more of his confidences. He watched her gloomily while she prepared for the night: which she did by prizing off her boots and tying up her head in a sort of young antimacassar. She then closed her eyes very tight and began to make little auto-suggestive snores.

"Oh, of course," Peter said, "if *that's* how you feel! I could have taken the hint—even without the boots! But what about your woman's heart, Madame?"

Under the influence of the cognac this organ seemed to be functioning admirably in the old lady.

Peter picked up the paper off the floor, to show how little he cared for the snub; but, finding a morsel of the old lady's *petit Suisse* adhering to its pages, he cast it from him in some perturbation.

"I'll tell you what I shall do," he cried to himself, jumping up. "I shall go and stand—just stand—in their corridor! No harm in *that*, I should hope! I've got a horrible feeling they might get off at Lyon or Valence or one of these places—and *then* where should I be? Good-night, Madame, and pleasant dreams. . . . No, don't get up, don't get up! . . ."

Not that the old lady had shown the slightest sign of intending any such politeness! Indeed, her last remark, as Peter slipped through the doorway, was utterly unprintable.

"Pig!" Peter said to himself.

And indeed the sound was not unlike.

2.

"Now where, where, where," Peter inquired of his own soul, as he stood in the corridor swaying with the train, "have I seen the old gentleman before? Because," he told himself, "that I *have* seen him before, somewhere and at some time, is quite beyond all question!"

"It is equally quite beyond all question," Peter added, after a pause, "that I will see him again! If at Avignon, then at Avignon! Now, how," Peter wondered, "does one vamp an old gentleman? If I could only remember where I've seen him before, and in what context, so to speak,—I should have an idea how to proceed when we all arrive at Avignon. How nice that sounds!—'when we all arrive at Avignon!' They, of course, have no idea that their party has been enlarged by one ever since they left Paris. . . . But we know it, don't we?" Peter addressed the reflection of himself in the darkened window-pane opposite.

"Yes, we know it all right," Peter resumed, nodding darkly at his image—which was in fact calculated to give considerable comfort to a man in his condition. "We know it . . .

and the rest can wait. The disclosure of our dark purposes can bide its time." Inspired by this manner of speech, he pulled down the brim of his hat, which was a soft one, with darksome effect, and muffled his mouth and chin in the collar of his coat.

"But where," he began again, "have I seen the old gentleman! A great deal depends on my being able to follow up that clue. 'All the world's a stage . . .' Now, let me briefly run over the scenes of my past life and try and make the old gentleman step naturally on from the wings at some point."

This exercise took some time. . . . And it was interrupted no fewer than three times by another form of exercise, which consisted in standing on tip-toe and flattening himself against the interior wall of the corridor, in order to allow the ticket-collector to pass. Each time the ticket-collector said "Pardon, Monsieur," in a thick wheezy voice; and each time Peter responded with "Il n'y a pas de quoi!"—a piece of idiomatic French of which he was exceedingly proud.

"All the same," he said to himself, after the third time, "I think there *is* something of what! Ticket-collectors ought to make up

their minds where they want to be and stay there! Besides, what sort of an hour is midnight for collecting tickets, anyhow? How odious every sort of collector is!—the stamp-collector, the postcard-collector, the rate and tax collector . . . and then there were disgusting things at Cambridge called 'collections.' . . ."

"Cambridge!" Peter suddenly exclaimed. He said the word aloud—in fact, quite shouted it, so that the ticket-collector, who was still lumbering pointlessly about at the far end of the corridor, turned and looked backwards with some reproof.

Peter blew him a kiss.

"You darling thing!" he said, apostrophising his late enemy; "but for you, and your inconvenient prowlings, I might never have started that train of thought! *Cambridge*, of course! *Of course*, Cambridge! It is at Cambridge that I remember the old gentleman! . . . If I hadn't cut so many of his lectures, I should have remembered much sooner! Doesn't that just show," Peter told his image in the pane, "how exceedingly wrong it is in thoughtless young men to cut lectures! I suppose she was quite a little girl in the days when I didn't

attend the dear old chap's lectures. . . . What a perfect little darling she must have been! And oh!" Peter cried, "what a *perfect* little *darling* she is!"

3.

"Did you by any chance, my dear," the Professor asked Adorée, in one of her short intervals of waking, "hear the word 'Cambridge' uttered quite loudly and distinctly in the corridor outside?"

"No, darling. Was it?"

"I certainly thought so. And it seems a strange thing to have fancied."

"Do you think you dreamt it, Daddy?"

"Hardly, my dear, for I have not been to sleep."

"Did you look out into the corridor?"

"I did, my dear. There seemed to be nothing but a single young man there."

"Why do you say 'nothing but'? And how do you know he was 'single'?"

"He was single in the sense that he had no companion. What I ask myself is, why should a—shall we say, solitary?—young man utter that name so clearly—by night, in the corridor of a southward-bound train?"

"Why shouldn't he?"

"There is no reason at all why he *should* not, my dear. . . . But it is odd all the same that he *did*."

"What did he look like?" Adorée asked.

"I said, my dear, that he appeared to be a young man."

"But what sort of a young man? Young men aren't all alike, Daddy darling."

"True, true, my dear," allowed the Professor, in the tone of one who reconsiders a matter. "But really—in the dim light of the corridor, you know—he did not appear in any way remarkable."

"Shall I look, Daddy?"

"No, my dear, I don't think I should do that if I were you."

"But you *did* do it, Daddy!"

"Yes, my dear, but I am not you."

"Well," Adorée said, after a moment's irresolution, "I think I shall just go to sleep again. I don't see why I should stay awake all night just because a young man says 'Cambridge' to himself. Perhaps it's his soothing word, Daddy—like 'Basingstoke.'"

"Very possibly. And certainly, my dear," agreed the Professor, "there can be no reason

why you should stay awake in order to hear him say it. Shall I tell you a little more about the Pontiffs of Avignon? . . . It sent you off almost at once before."

"Oh yes. And, Daddy," Adorée said, "I dreamt about one of them. He was tall and awfully good-looking. . . ."

"The Pope, my dear?"

"Yes, and of course I fell in love with him!"

"With the Pope?"

"Yes, and you see, the awful thing was . . . I suddenly realised he *was* Pope, and so, of course, *couldn't!*"

"If the Pontiffs excite you, my dear, perhaps I had better try the Roman antiquities."

"Oh yes, Daddy. Nobody, I should think, could dream about a Roman antiquity."

At all events, she was soon in a position to judge.

CHAPTER III

"Boldly she sings, to the merry tune she marches,
Brave is her shape, and sweeter unpossessed.
Sweeter, for she is what my heart first awaking
Whispered the world was; morning light is she.
Love that so desires would fain keep her changeless;
Fain would fling the net, and fain have her free.

LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

I.

IN the restaurant-car next morning, with the gay Provençal sunshine flooding in through the broad windows, Adorée's admiration and delight were almost equally divided between the smiling green landscapes which unfolded, and the diminutive jam-pots, each containing just enough jam for a single modest helping, wherewith the P.L.M. Company regales its happy travellers at breakfast.

"Aren't they sweet?" she said of the jam-pots, opening three in quick succession for the sheer pleasure of bursting the tiny paper covers. "And isn't it lovely?" she added of the landscape, which carried the charmed eye away,

away along the lines of cypress hedges to the satisfying amplitudes of young-green hills.

"I never saw a country that seemed to smile so," she went on. "Doesn't it, Daddy? Or rather, it laughs. Oh"—clutching her father's hand—"what a heavenly time you and I are going to have, Daddy darling, in this glorious country!"

And indeed the Provençal countryside does smile. Or rather, as Adorée said, it laughs. It laughs, and seems itself to sing, like those earliest poets of modern Europe, the Troubadours, whom it inspired with their song. In spite of its venerable monuments and débris of a thousand pasts, the landscape of Provence has the fresh inconsequent gaiety of a young girl in her springtime of health and enjoyment. There is about these rolling prospects of pasture and orchard a lightness and freshness of colour, a delicacy of contour, a nimbleness and grace of atmosphere, which are of the very essence of youth and high romance, and might inspire a lesser than Petrarch to song.

"The Avignon Popes may have been a bad lot, Daddy," Adorée said, "but I think they were very sensible to come and live here, don't you?"

"I do not know that they were altogether a 'bad lot,' as you put it, my dear. It is common indeed to decry them for luxury and frivolity. But there is something about the climate of Provence, I think, which disposes to a life of broad views and liberal toleration —and certainly, in their day, Provence was a focus of light and learning: such as I, at any rate, should have found vastly more agreeable than the strait canons of asceticism."

"These canons are a nuisance," Adorée said, mistaking her father's meaning. "Aunt Isabel's favourite kill-joy is a canon. I can't think why they want to be so much more particular than other clergymen. Now, bishops are much better. . . . I met two at a bazaar once, and they were awfully nice."

The Professor did not correct his daughter (he never did), but pursued his own train of thought.

"The Popes," he said, "certainly owed Provence some recompense, for only a hundred years before the country had been ravaged with ruthless war, and its fair civilisation almost wholly destroyed, at the instigation of the reigning Pontiff, Pope Innocent III."

"Horrid old pig! Why?"

"Well, my dear, as I said, the climate of Provence is favourable to broad views and liberal culture, whereas the general mind of Europe at that period was far otherwise. The Pope merely represented the general mind when he preached a crusade against the premature civilisation which was indifferent to, if it did not actually despise, the current theological niceties. But time brought its revenges, and Provence is now covered with beautiful works of medieval architecture which owe their existence to the vast resources of the Avignon Popes."

"All the same, I hate that wicked old Innocent," Adorée said. "Just like all clergymen, I expect: always down on people for not going to church! I can't fancy a Troubadour going to church, somehow—at least, not to Aunt Isabel's church. I don't think poets do go to church. Fancy if the Archbishop of Canterbury were to knock down Chelsea because the artists don't go to church!"

"He would have done once," said the Professor, "and Park Lane and Wapping Old Stairs would have approved his action."

"Well, I'm glad I didn't live then. Aunt Isabel is bad enough as it is, and I expect she

would have been worse if she'd had the Pope behind her instead of one of those 'strait canons' you were talking about, Daddy. Are they called 'strait' because of their waistcoats? . . . Aunt Isabel's one wears such a funny waistcoat. Oh, Daddy," Adorée suddenly exclaimed, pointing out of the window, "whatever is that glorious great fairy castle over there? Oh, do look quick!"

"That, my dear," said the Professor, rising in a great hurry, "is the Palace of the Popes. We are just arriving at Avignon, and the sooner we get back to our compartment, to assemble our belongings, the better."

2.

Peter's breakfast, that first lovely morning in the incomparable Avignon of early June, was nevertheless a dire failure. It took place on the front terrace of the Grand Hôtel du Palais et de l'Univers—a name which expresses that hotel's honest opinion of itself. This hotel is very large and very handsome, but there is nothing of Avignon about it, nothing of France; it is a foretaste of the joys of the Riviera, and was built to accommodate those wishing, in the language of their country, to

give Avignon the 'once-over' on their way to the more congenial attractions of the Côte d'Azur.

Peter, realising this, was depressed.

"I did well enough in Paris," he said to himself; "I acted smartly and with real decision. But I've made a mess of things down here. . . . And all," he added, pulling his own hair viciously, "because of my cursed snobbish habit of getting by instinct into the most opulent-looking hotel-bus. It serves me jolly well right—though I say it as most wish it didn't! I might have known that *they* would never come to an hotel with a bus like that. . . . Fool, fool that I am!"

His coffee was almost perfect, but it did not at all console him. He sipped it with distaste.

"Why didn't you go in to breakfast in the restaurant-car, when the nice man told you?" he asked himself severely. "Then you would at least have *seen* her this morning! Oh, you ass! And I'll tell you why you didn't, too," he pursued relentlessly; "it was because you weren't shaved! You didn't want her to see you unshaved—though the chances are she'd never have looked at you once, you great gorm-

less oaf! . . . and, in any case, you don't show your fool of a beard much! Now you're shaved all right, you infernal fop—and I hope you're satisfied, I'm sure . . . for there's no one to see you now—no one to see you now!"

The rolls were really exquisite, but a gathering of little Avignon birds got most of Peter's.

"But," he began again, his countenance darkening wrathfully, "some part of your misfortunes, you poor misjudged and misjudging thing, is due to that dreadful old woman on the train! I knew she'd get back on me somehow, for the way I ticked her off last night! She is an old witch—and one should be frightfully careful what one says to witches. If I had been off the train in good time, I should have *seen* where they went."

He sighed heavily—so heavily, indeed, as to bring the waiter hurrying to his side. Peter waved the minion away.

The fact is that Peter's detraining that morning, usually expeditious enough, had been sadly delayed by the old lady's having seized the opportunity of his prolonged absence in the corridor the night before to annex and adapt to her uses a small but vital item of his luggage. It was, in fact, the very item—a

small, flat case—which contained his shaving implements, and his anguish at failing to find it may be imagined. The old lady had indeed made it a sort of foundation for her pillow, and, as she was still fast asleep when the train arrived at Avignon, with her head, wrapped in its antimacassar, resting upon the pillow which concealed the case, it is very little to be wondered at that Peter's eye, frantically searching, did not immediately light on his missing property. A fluke revealed it to him at last: the aberration of despair caused him to rest a bulky Gladstone bag on the precise spot where the old lady had put the *petit Suisse* the night before, and, on her raising her head with a yell—which was echoed by Peter as a corner of his case met his eye,—he had snatched it from under her, bringing with it the flask of cognac and a large bag of mixed biscuits, and made his escape, pursued by vituperations. Too late, however: by the time he reached the vestibule of the station, his quarry was nowhere to be seen! 'Gone,' as Peter ruefully put it to himself, 'like the touch of a vanished hand.' In the stupefaction resulting from this shock, he had allowed himself to be put by an American Express man

(of all people!) into a waiting bus, and had been whirled away he knew not whither.

Now, however, he knew. . . . And he knew too that it was altogether the wrong place!

"Oh, what care I," Peter thought to himself, "for views of the Palais des Papes from my bedroom window? It is vanity, mere vanity! What should it profit a man if he had a view of the Pope himself—and lost the view of a perfect little angel carrying the entire landscape of heaven in each corner of her eyes!"

He brooded over this for some time.

"At any rate," he said at length, "there is one place here in Avignon where they *must* come sooner or later. And that is just precisely the Palace of the Popes! Very well, then," he added, rising with renewed hope, "I will from this time forth attach myself, recking nothing of exhausted nature, to *every single party* which is shown over that monument! Garçon!"

"Monsieur?"

"Vous pouvez me directer au Palais des Papes?"

"Mais certainement."

"Alors?"

CHAPTER IV

"Hither she comes; she comes to me; she lingers,
Deepens her brown eyebrows, while in new surprise
High rise the lashes in wonder of a stranger;
Yet am I the light and living of her eyes."

LOVE IN THE VALLEY

I.

"WELL, if *that's* what Petrarch looked like," Adorée said disgustedly, holding out for the Professor's inspection a picture-postcard of the celebrated poet, "I don't wonder Laura never married him! I hope the other Troubadours weren't so beefy-looking. And did he really wear that silly thing on his head?" She referred to the laurel wreath with which the poet is crowned in the portrait.

"Petrarch was not a Troubadour, my dear. And I confess I cannot see what you find objectionable in this fine countenance, which to me appears full of soul and creative energy. He may perhaps have tended to burliness in later life, but that is not unbecoming to a hale man of ripe years."

"I suppose I never thought of him as a 'hale man of ripe years,'" Adorée said, making a face. "Poets ought to be slender and beautiful, like Shelley. Besides, 'ripe' is such a nasty word, used of anything but fruit, and . . . Oh, horrors! Here's Laura! *Gracious!* What a fright!"

"My dear, you quite distress me," expostulated the Professor, peering worriedly through his glasses at the maligned inspiration of the immortal Sonnets. "One must allow, of course, for the fashions of those times, but in all essential respects this appears to me to be a most uplifted profile."

"She looks as if she had just said, 'Papa, potatoes, poultry, prunes and prisms,'" Adorée criticised maliciously. "I expect her Aunt Isabel had told her to. Had she an Aunt Isabel? She ought to have been my Aunt Isabel's niece, instead of me. Now I understand why Petrarch's poetry is so dull! It *is* dull, you know. But never mind, Daddy darling: don't look so grieved. Anyhow, if Laura is a disappointment to me, Avignon isn't; I think it's one of the most heavenly places I ever was in. I could mess and poke about in these darling old streets for ever.

Come on now, though: it's time we . . . *Darling! Your hat!* . . ."

A puff of Mistral had torn the Professor's hat from his head and whirled it into mid-air—whence, after playing with it there for a second or two, it shot it violently into the waistcoat of a stout Provençal, who expertly grabbed it and returned it with profuse compliments to its owner.

It was Adorée who, in her pretty French, offered thanks: wherefore some minutes elapsed before the stout Provençal could be induced to move on.

The Mistral, that frolicsome breath of the Rhone Valley, has a demoralising effect upon the ordinarily docile human hat, which, under its influence, becomes possessed of a wanton spirit of its own. But there is something so sportive about this wind, so suggestive of a lusty child at play, that one feels sympathy rather than chiding for the hat which joins in the game. Hats have but a dull time of it, for the most part.

"I suppose," the Professor remarked, as he adjusted his hat more securely, "that if all the hats and head-dresses could be numbered which the Mistral has removed in the course

of ages, they would amount to a formidable total."

"I wonder," Adorée agreed, "if it ever blew the Pope's tiara off? If *that* had bumped into somebody's tummy, he'd have known about it! But come along, Daddy; we've got to go and see over the Palace of the Popes."

2.

Said the Professor, a little later, as he and his daughter together with a large crowd of miscellaneous tourists were being shepherded over the Papal Palace by a voluble old guide:

"It is a pity, I think, that one could not be allowed to inspect this marvellous edifice in one's own time and company. Not but what our cicerone is probably most instructive (for such as can follow provincial French spoken so rapidly), or that our companions are not pleasant people enough, but I confess I should be glad to linger a little and examine things at my leisure. At every window, more especially, there are prospects of surpassing loveliness, such as deserve more than a jostled glance in passing."

"Daddy," Adorée whispered, "there's a young man always looking at me!"

"Then, my dear," rejoined the Professor, "he appears to me to be wasting an opportunity of acquainting himself with much that is absorbingly interesting. This vaulting is really very fine. . . . And yonder is the door through which His Holiness entered to preside in consistory. It is easy to imagine the Sovereign Pontiff, his cardinals grouped around him, rising from his elevated seat, and . . . My *dear* child, whatever *can* be the matter?"

For even the Professor, in the full flow of his enthusiasm, could not fail to notice that Adorée was blushing a bright rose-pink far down her neck, while all the rest of the party regarded her with amusement.

"It was that awful old guide," Adorée told her father, when a general movement for the contiguous hall gave her time to cool off and recover. "You know how he leans out of every window, blocking all the view, and shouting 'Ah, le beau pays de Provence, luisant, éblouissant, séduisant, ravissant'—and about how the Troubadours sang the beauty of their ladies all over it? Well, he was letting it come as usual, and brandishing his stick (he nearly knocked that American lady's hat off—and she couldn't think of the French for 'Don't!'),

when he suddenly spotted me . . . and he shouted out louder than ever, 'And if *Mademoiselle* had lived in those times, they would have sung HER TOO!' That's what all the people were grinning at. . . . Did I look too silly? And, what do you think, Daddy?—I heard that awful young man say 'Hear, hear!'"

"It appears to me, my dear," said the Professor, "that you are thoroughly enjoying yourself in Provence. As for the young man to whom you allude, one must assume that he is ill-educated, since he can find none but an impertinent use for his eyes in this treasury of the past. If he annoys you, my dear, I will take an opportunity of explaining to him that you are in no sense an exhibit."

"Oh, he isn't *rude*, Daddy," Adorée hastened to say. "I'm sure he's quite all right—rather nice, in fact. There he is—over in that corner. No, not that fright. . . . I mean the tall, nice-looking, *English* one in the far corner."

"My dear," said the Professor, "my own object in coming here was to see over the Palace of the Popes. . . . I had no idea of following the movements of strange young men. Do let me call your attention to these

fine portraits. Here we have a bust of the Queen Joan, who sold Avignon to the Holy See as a work of piety—though, to be sure, I have heard that she asked and obtained a very fair price for it! Now, *she* certainly appears no beauty."

"She's an absolute fright, Daddy."

"Yet her amours, my dear, were the talk of the time. One notices the same thing in the Divorce Court to-day. And here," pursued the Professor, as they entered a fresh chamber, "is the papal dormitory. Well, well . . . to be sure, to be sure!"

"I can't imagine a pope in bed," Adorée said.

"It is not an exercise encouraged by the Church, my dear. Infallibility is a 'hard saying' at the best of times, but more especially, perhaps, when the authority is in bed."

"It's to be hoped he didn't snore," Adorée remarked. "There's a fearful echo all over this place. Wasn't it killing, Daddy, when the old Guide sang downstairs, to let us hear it? That young man was laughing like . . . *Daddy!*" Adorée's voice dropped to a thrilling whisper. "*That young man is coming to speak to you!*"

The Professor, raising his eyes from some

closer examination of the papal flooring, was just in time to receive the first tentative and respectful smile of a very agreeable pair of eyes set far apart in the brown face of a tall young man. One would have judged the owner of the prepossessing eyes to be about twenty-eight years of age. One might have ventured to guess further that he had been well educated, and that he had fought in the War.

"Excuse me, sir," said the newcomer, "but am I not right in taking you to be Professor Lore—whose lectures I used to attend at Cambridge? Will you permit me to take the privilege of an old pupil and make myself known to you? My name is Archer—Peter Archer."

"If you have attended my lectures, Mr. Archer," said the Professor, as he took the hand which the young man held out to him, "I ought not to wonder at your recognising me, even so far from our common University; for do not psychologists contend that our strongest and most lasting impressions are received in a state between sleeping and waking?"

"I assure you, sir, I was always wide awake at your lectures."

"I think, Mr. Archer," said the Professor,

with a smile, "that you are always very wide awake. You must allow me, if you please, to present you to my daughter, my companion in this romantic country. Adoree, my dear, here is a Mr. Petrarca—I beg your pardon, a Mr. Peter Archer—who bears your father no grudge for having lectured to him at one time."

"How do you do," Adorée said, in a tone which removed her at once to some steep and frosty pinnacle of the distant Alps.

"I am delighted to meet you," returned the new acquaintance, in the voice of a modest but resolute scaler of peaks.

"Now that you have somebody to talk to, Daddy," Adorée said, after a very few more courtesies on both sides, "I think I'll just go the rest of the way round with the guide. I know you are tired, and will be glad to stay here and talk about—Cambridge, to—er Mr. Archer."

"But perhaps, my dear, Mr. Archer wishes also to go round with the rest."

"Not at all, sir," said Mr. Archer—who, in fact, for as strong as he was, ached in every limb from no other cause.

"We will follow more slowly," said the Professor; and with that, Adorée left them.

3.

"It is gratifying indeed," remarked the Professor, with a rather unprofessorial smile playing about the corners of his mouth, "when a lecture fosters in its audience anything but a desire for the future to avoid the speaker. It may be that I become more genial as I advance in years, or some other explanation may be to be sought, but it is an indubitable fact that my pupils, both past and present, are rallying round me to-day with an attention they used not to show. In Belgium last summer, when my daughter and I were touring those parts together, there were but few hotels in which we were not greeted by one or more old pupils of mine."

The young man was understood to murmur in reply, with a slight deepening of colour, that this surely was the common penalty of eminence. In Provence more especially, he suggested, the Professor must expect to find large numbers of those whom his teaching had inspired to the love and pursuit of beauty.

"Why, yes, I suppose so, Mr. Archer," said the Professor, after a moment's thought; "for beauty is one, is it not?—whether it be

of a building, a landscape, or even of a young girl."

The young man glanced keenly at the older after this speech, but there was upon the latter's face an expression of such perfect simplicity as disarmed his momentary suspicion.

"Beauty is certainly one, sir," the young man agreed; "but it is perhaps more immediately and powerfully attractive in some manifestations than in others."

It was now the Professor's turn to glance, and his manner, after he had done so, underwent a certain change.

"Your words, Mr. Archer," said the Professor, "encourage me to hope that I have found a kindred spirit. Among all the many and various interests of this beautiful country, what is it, I wonder, that occupies you most?"

They had paused, as the Professor spoke, beside a window, and through it the young man gazed out upon the rich and vivid landscape for a moment before replying.

"It is a hard question to answer, sir," he said at length; "for here in Provence the centuries change before one's very eyes like the colours in a prism. One may cover a thousand years by simply crossing the road: on one side may

be an old doorway of the Middle Ages, on the other some grand memorial of classic antiquity. But if," he proceeded, his eye searching the prospect until it rested at last upon a soft lap of sunny earth beyond the superbly-flowing river, "if one aspect of Provence interests me at present beyond all others, I should say it was the Troubadours and their theme of ideal love."

This speech of his former pupil's keenly delighted the Professor, and he beamed approvingly upon the young man through his glasses.

"You have chosen very wisely," the Professor said; "for love is the reconciler of the ages. Ancient or modern, love is neither, yet both. What Petrarch felt for Laura beside the neighbouring Fountain of Vaucluse differs only in the volume of its expression from what many had felt before him and many still feel at this day. We may cover a thousand years, as you very well say, between the near pavements of an old Provençal street; but if our meditation be upon love this will not bewilder, for in love we have the key to all that is most vital in history."

Adorée, meanwhile, had passed out of sight,

having closely attached herself to the throng of tourists which surrounded the still voluble guide.

"Your daughter, sir," said the young man, gazing wistfully at the spot where she was last seen, "seems to have inherited your passion for history."

"My daughter, Mr. Archer," returned the Professor, with dancing eyes, "inherits chiefly from Eve. She is a line of research I have long abandoned. When the Almighty, in His inscrutable wisdom, created woman, He may have meant among other things to remind us old professors (a consequence of the Fall!) that the change which we call history is mere illusion, the essence of things for ever and unalterably the same."

He took the young man's arm very cordially as he spoke, and together, and still in conversation, the two descended the venerable stairway to the great courtyard below.

"Well, well," said the Professor, a little later, "this has been a delightful and stimulating morning; and if you can really find any pleasure in my often prosy conversation, Mr. Archer, I shall be delighted to have you with me on some of our rambles, as you pro-

pose. My daughter often prefers to amuse herself among the shops and quaint old streets of the towns we visit, and this she would feel the more free to do if . . . Ah, here she is now, coming to rejoin us! But no, she appears to wish to purchase some postcards. Well, my dear Mr. Archer, I must not detain you longer. We shall meet again very shortly, unless," concluded the Professor, with his quiet smile, "I am very much mistaken."

CHAPTER V

"Swift with the to-morrow, green-winged Spring!"
LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

THE proper place to stay at in Avignon, if what one would have is an interior charm to assort with that everywhere outside, is the Hôtel des Platanes. This establishment cannot compete with the splendour of the Grand Hôtel du Palais et de l'Univers, but then it is not trying to compete; it is contentedly and charmingly an old-fashioned French hotel of the best traditions. The apartments are quaint and not sumptuous, the service is sufficient only, the cuisine excellent; and there is a courtyard muffled in ivy where under the foliage of a superb plane dinner is served in the warm dusk of summer evenings. Here the visitor may sit over his wine, inhaling the sweet, mild air, in touch with the animation of the gay street, and yet a little sequestered from it—and watching the great Provençal stars grow brighter and still more bright.

It was at this hotel that Adorée and the

Professor were staying, and at the moment they were occupied as has been described. Adoree rejoiced more perhaps in the gaiety of the street, the Professor in the surpassing glory of the summer stars. It was the evening of their first day in Avignon.

Enter to them now a waiter, who, knowing that Mademoiselle spoke fluently with his tongue whereas Monsieur did not, addressed himself to her. It appeared that a Monsieur desired earnestly to confer with Monsieur *son père* in the vestibule of the hotel.

"I expect," Adorée said, "it's that young man, Daddy."

"Very probably, my dear," agreed the Professor.

"Will you go and speak to him? I wonder what he wants—coming at this time."

"We can easily ascertain, my dear. In all probability he will make that clear to us himself. But I suggest that, instead of my going to him in the vestibule, he should be invited to join us here. Are you going away, my dear?"

"Only to get a wrap, Daddy."

"Perhaps you will speak to Mr. Archer as you pass through the vestibule?"

"I'm going in through the dining-room, Daddy. The waiter will tell him."

The waiter did so, and Mr. Archer was quickly forthcoming. Adorée's disappearance, through the long windows of the dining-room, occurred at almost exactly the same minute.

Mr. Archer standing in the vestibule, and Mr. Archer greeting the Professor (with the flutter of a vanishing white frock catching the tail of his eye), were two quite different young men: the former had been animated, the latter was dejected; the former looked like a Troubadour who has been pressingly invited to sing, the latter looked like a Troubadour who has been pressingly invited to stop.

"I am afraid, sir," began Mr. Archer No. 2, "that I disturb you, coming so late."

"Not at all, not at all, Mr. Archer. I am delighted to see you. My daughter has gone indoors for a wrap. . . . She will rejoin us, I have no doubt, in a few minutes."

"You are awfully kind, sir." And Mr. Archer No. 1 sat down in the chair indicated, and did as he was told with the bottle.

"What a wonderful evening!" the Professor remarked, looking up at the stars.

"Marvellous!" Mr. Archer agreed, glancing round at the dining-room windows.

"Nothing," said the Professor, "is lacking to one's perfect content on a night such as this."

The visitor seemed hardly prepared to go so far. But then a look came over his face which might have suggested a chess-player's when he sees a good opening.

"Something *is* rather lacking to mine at the moment, sir," he said; "but it won't be if you and Miss Lore will do what I, in fact, came here this evening to beg of you."

"I am sure you will find us ready to do as we would be done by," the Professor encouraged him. "But here," he added, "comes my daughter back, in time to speak for herself."

"Nothing," Peter Archer murmured to himself, "is lacking to one's perfect content on a night such as this! Good-evening, Miss Lore," he said aloud.

"Good-evening," Adorée said.

She took the chair which Peter placed for her, smiling her thanks. The smile was faint and shy, but friendly enough—and so sweet in Peter's eyes that he began racking his brains for something else to offer her so that she might

do it again. Meanwhile, he exulted mightily, for that which was to be before the world began had come to pass, and the three of them sat in a circle.

"Do you smoke, Miss Lore?" Peter suggested, and he proffered his case.

"Yes, I do sometimes. Thank you."

"It is a sight well worth watching," the Professor said, imitating with his pipe Adoree's manner of holding a cigarette at a careful distance from her face.

"I am sure it is," Peter agreed, before he had had time to reflect.

"You are very rude, both of you," Adorée said. "And, anyhow, there will be nothing for you to laugh at unless one of you gives me a match."

"I have a match all ready for you," Peter assured her. "I am only waiting till you are ready for it. It's an English match, too!"

He held the flame across, but with deliberate clumsiness failed at first to find the end of the cigarette. Adorée's face was stretched out towards him, with the light of the flame upon it.

"You're not very clever," Adorée told him.

Peter pleaded guilty with his lips, but not in his heart.

"And if you laugh, like Daddy, at the way I smoke," Adorée warned him, "I shall be cross. I smoke the way it suits me."

"Indeed you do!"

"Mr. Archer wishes to ask something of us, my dear," the Professor remarked. "He was just going to do so when you came out."

"Oh, what?" Adorée said, looking full at Peter. "Is it something nice?"

"I wish it were something much nicer," Peter said. "I'm afraid it's only a little excursion—in a car I've got hold of."

"In a car? But how delightful! Daddy, won't it be lovely?"

"I shall wait till I see how Archer drives, my dear," the Professor said. Peter noticed the plain 'Archer,' and was exceeding glad.

"I am really quite a good driver, sir," he said.

"Do you go fast?" Adorée said. "I like to go very fast. Like the wind!"

"I simply tear along," Peter hastened to assure her.

"Then I shall not come," the Professor said, laughing.

"Oh, but, sir—speed is safety in France, you know. You must come. It's to the Pont du Gard—the Roman aqueduct, marvellously beautiful. The faster we go, the more time there'll be at the aqueduct."

"I'm not very keen on aqueducts," Adorée said.

"You will be on this one. . . . Won't she, sir? It spans a glorious ravine, all rocks and trees. I've planned a picnic there, if you don't mind. What do you particularly like at picnics?"

"Daddy likes wine," Adorée told him. "And not only at picnics!"

"Which reminds me!" exclaimed the Professor. "Garçon! encore du vin, s'il vous plait."

"But what do *you* like, Miss Lore?" Peter persisted, anxious to make his prospective basket a real move in the game.

"I? Oh, I like—chocolates."

"What sort particularly?"

"Oh, all sorts."

"There shall be all sorts."

"Except," Adorée added, "the big sort that bursts and squirts a nasty taste in among one's teeth."

"She means liqueur-chocolates," her father annotated.

"We won't have any of them," Peter promised. "And we'll have any amount of wine. It's a biggish car. Thanks awfully, sir." And Peter helped himself from the Professor's new bottle.

"We'll go to Nîmes too," Peter went on; "it's an awfully interesting town, I believe. There's a very famous circus there."

"Oh, a circus!" Adorée exclaimed.

"Not like Olympia, my dear . . . a Roman circus."

Adorée subsided.

"Do you like circuses, Miss Lore?" Peter asked, feeling his fever increase, and devoutly wishing there were some such entertainment in the neighbourhood.

"I like the real sort—with clowns," Adorée said. "But Roman circuses are so dull. . . . Nothing ever happens. I suppose they couldn't have clowns in Latin."

"It does sound rather hard," Peter owned. "But never mind, we'll have a glorious time to-morrow. And if you'd like to be amused just now, Miss Lore," he added, greatly daring, "there's a cinema just across the road. That's its bell that goes on tinkling."

"Oh, Daddy," Adorée cried, "do let's! It would be such fun!"

"What about my wine?" said the Professor, who knew, however, that he was let in for it.

"We'll take it across," Peter said. "It's done in French cinemas, and there's a ledge to the boxes."

"Oh, a box!" Adorée cried, ecstatically.

"Not like the London 'Tivoli,' Miss Lore. A very queer sort of box."

"Oh, but let's go before any more of the show is over. Daddy, if you won't mind to-night, I'll take such an interest in your sort of circus to-morrow. . . . You see if I don't! And I'll be frightfully thrilled by your aqueduct."

"Come along, my dear child," said the Professor amiably. "To me it seems a pity to exchange the peace of this charming garden for the heat of a congested interior. But if you will really enjoy it . . ."

"Oh, but, Daddy—a cinema!"

"Come along," said the Professor, patting his daughter's cheek—and doing it exactly on the pretty flush which was moving Peter to transports of extemporary prayer.

"I've got the bottle, sir," Peter said, tucking

it under his arm and putting a glass in his pocket.

"That's a good boy," replied the Professor.

"Oh, come along, come along!" Adorée cried, dancing before them out of the garden. "Oh, I do wonder what it will be!"

Peter, bringing up the rear, snatched a moment to look up at the shining stars and thank whichever among them were his.

CHAPTER VI

" Here may life on death or death on life be painted.
Let me clasp her soul to know she cannot die!"
LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

ADORÉE had, in fact, no difficulty in keeping her promise to her father, and in being 'frightfully thrilled' by the Pont du Gard, that glorious example of Roman thoroughness. Anybody might well be 'thrilled' by that sight, however bored as a rule by the Romans.

" Now that," Adorée said generously, standing on the smooth yellow rocks of the ravine and gazing up at the superb flying arches of the great aqueduct, " is a 'monument of antiquity' even I can appreciate! It's *perfectly* beautiful—and that's all there is to be said about it. So please, Mr. Archer, don't begin telling me what particular old Roman built it, or when, or why, or anything. Nothing irritates me so much as a lot of tiresome details when what I'm trying to take in is a general effect."

"Then, my dear," said the Professor, "I fear you must often find your old father a sadly irritating companion."

"No, I don't, darling. You are never tiresomely detailed, and, when you are, I never listen! I was only afraid Mr. Archer might feel bound to tire himself unnecessarily (after carrying that heavy picnic basket too!) by repeating choice extracts from the guidebook I see sticking out of his pocket. How exactly like you, Mr. Archer, to have a guidebook!"

"It isn't a guidebook, Miss Lore. It's a map."

"Well, a map, then. How exactly like you to have a map! Isn't it like him, Daddy?"

"It is like a prudent man, my dear. A map is a very useful thing indeed. I used often to carry one myself—a classical one. On one occasion, in a wild part of Northern England, when I was out for the day with a friend (also a professor), we proffered our classical guide to a distressed motorist, forgetting for the moment that things had somewhat changed. I have too much reason to fear that he may have followed a road leading in these latter days—and that with some precipitancy—to a number of disused quarries."

"*Daddy!* What a *dreadful* thing! Did you ever hear what happened?"

"Not in so many words, my dear. But you see how wise Archer is to come provided with a contemporary survey. Had that motorist been equally provident, he might have been spared some trouble."

"Or if," Peter said, as well as he could for laughing, "the poor wretch had never fallen among professors! But I am afraid, Miss Lore, your contemplation of the Pont du Gard is being disturbed by details even less to the point than what I might have produced out of a guidebook."

"I was just thinking," Adorée said, putting her head on one side and still gazing up at the sublime aqueduct, "that nowadays that sort of thing—aqueduct and bridge, I mean—would be just an ugly mass of iron tubes and girders: something which would absolutely spoil this lovely valley of rocks and trees, instead of—as *that* does—sort of completing everything. And yet the Romans were a practical, military lot, weren't they, Daddy?—and wouldn't have minded spoiling things. Did people simply *not know how* to be ugly and mean in those days?"

"They built for all time, my dear. The Romans had no idea that their empire would pass away, and they conveyed this to the world by the stability and splendour of their structures. A thing was only Roman, and worthy of Rome, if it was of a sort to last for ever. We—even you, my dear—are rendering tribute to Cæsar at this moment, just as he meant all generations should."

"Conceited old thing!" And Adorée transferred her gaze from the Pont du Gard to the picnic basket.

"I should be glad, however," the Professor said, "if any work of mine might last as long as this of the Romans."

"It won't, darling," Adorée assured him, "if it's anything you make with your hands! Do you know, Mr. Archer, Daddy can't even tie his own tie to this day! He just fumbles and groans, and leaves it, and comes down to breakfast, and I do it for him. That smart old bow he's wearing just now is of my tying. . . . Isn't it sweet? But what he'll do when I get married, I just can't think!"

"Are you thinking of getting married, Miss Lore?"

"Don't I have to be thought of first? Oh,

not immediately: someday, I suppose. But it doesn't matter when, so far as Daddy's tie is concerned. . . . He'll never learn to tie it."

"Perhaps, my dear, I shall be dead before that day comes."

"If you are, I'll never speak to you again, Daddy. You're not going to die for ages. You're as strong as the Pont du Gard."

"In that case, my dear, you will probably predecease me. So my tie will still go untied."

"But I'm going to live for ages too," Adorée declared.

"And so am I," said Peter Archer, stooping as he spoke to open the picnic basket, whereof the contents certainly seemed calculated to sustain life over protracted periods of time.

The Professor seated himself on a flat rock in the shade of an acacia and produced a small corkscrew from his pocket.

"Nothing to my mind," he said, "could be more entirely delightful than our present surroundings. Here we are, in a scene of the utmost natural beauty, under a gracious summer sky, preparing, as we contemplate a superb monument of the past, to regale ourselves on

the choicest dainties of the present. Our situation might almost form the theme for a classic frieze: there is youth here, and strength "—with a bow to Peter—"and . . ."

"Wisdom," suggested the young man, returning the bow.

"And beauty!" Adorée said. "Don't you two go leaving me out! And to complete the classic frieze, Daddy darling, there's a car full of tourists going over the bridge!"

"The car, at any rate," said the Professor, "is no disharmony upon a Roman bridge. The lines of the modern car are quite Roman in their graceful strength and efficiency."

"I agree, sir," Peter said, busily unpacking; "I can quite imagine the Romans in cars. The finest road-makers in the world would have been glad to whack up the speed going over them. Can't you just *see* old Julius Cæsar, with a legionary of the Tenth for chauffeur, simply whanging up to Gaul in a high-power Hispano-Suiza, with a fierce-looking eagle scolding on the bonnet!"

"I wonder what sort of a car Cicero would have had?" Adorée said, rather taken with this view of the Romans.

"I hope a man is not known by his car,"

the Professor said, "for mine, they tell me, is a . . ."

"Don't, *don't* tell him what sort it is, Daddy! I can see in every line of Mr. Archer's face that he's a sort of car highbrow."

"You're very unkind," Peter expostulated. "I'm nothing of the sort. And please do let the Professor tell me what sort of a car yours is."

"No, I shan't. Daddy, don't you dare! It's a very nice car, and I drive it, oh, so expertly. But that's all you're going to know about it."

"Perhaps," Peter said, "I shall come and *see* what sort it is someday." He glanced at Adorée as he spoke, but she was exclaiming over the chocolates.

"I never *saw* so many!" she said. "Oh, how *sweet* of you!"

"I know all about chocolates," Peter said; "in fact, I . . ."

But he suddenly stopped without mentioning what it was 'in fact, he . . .'

The Professor meanwhile had uncorked a bottle of Châteauneuf-des-Papes, from which he now refreshed himself with every sign of the highest philosophic contentment. And,

indeed, the wines of the Côtes-du-Rhône are certainly not the least of the many attractions of Provence. It is a great blessing to be able to drink freely of good wine: not in sips, with glances at the dwindling level in the bottle—or in guilty gulps, with thoughts of the mounting bill at the merchant's.

"Personally," remarked the Professor, "I like my wine as a beverage. Sips and tastes are of no use to me: only as a free and plenteous beverage is good wine properly to be enjoyed." He gave a demonstration of his meaning, before adding: "Wine and wit, literature and tobacco—these are marriages made in heaven."

"*Gracious!*" Adorée exclaimed. "What a lot of bottles! Did we really bring all those?"

"If we brought too many," said her father, "we will make amends, on the principle of Charles Lamb, by taking back too few. You, my dear, are generally unpersuadable in the item of wine, but Archer, I am happy to see, has acquired this civilised taste."

"If it is civilised to like wine," Peter said, "then I am as civilised as any man alive. In fact, I . . ."

But again he suddenly broke off without mentioning what 'in fact, he . . .'

"But I must say," he went on, "I think we all deserve something restorative after our very strenuous morning in Nîmes. Do try a little of the white, Miss Lore: I brought it specially for you, and it will do you good. I really did not know," he added, "that professors of history could be so active and—and positively acrobatic as you, sir, this morning, all up and down the tiers in the arena. And in the broiling sun, too!"

"What a magnificent arena it is!" exclaimed the Professor, his eye kindling in retrospect. "And where else shall we see so perfect a temple as the Maison Carrée?"

"Do you mean that poky little churchy thing, Daddy?"

"Do *you*, my dear, mean the exquisite little temple of Jupiter?"

"I mean the thing you wouldn't come out of! Mr. Archer and I were so bored, waiting about outside."

"I was not bored," Peter protested.

"Well, you looked it—pitiably."

"'Pitiable,'" Peter said, "is just about the word that applies. I was thinking of something I've lost."

"Have you lost something? Something valuable? Where did you lose it?"

"I lost it on the platform in Paris a few days ago, and I shall never get it back, I know for a fact—because it was stolen."

"Did you see the thief, then?"

"As clearly as I see you at this moment."

"But didn't you make a fuss?" Adorée said. "Didn't you run after him?"

"I regularly raised Cain, and I ran after the thief like a hare."

"What was it you lost, anyhow? You haven't told me that yet."

"Oh, a queer thing. . . . I shouldn't think you have ever seen one. It was a sort of pump: rather a valuable thing of its kind. I don't believe there's another exactly like it in the world."

"A sort of pump!" Adorée repeated. "What an extraordinary thing to be carrying about with you! And what good would it be to the thief?"

"No good, I'm afraid. That's what makes the whole affair so wretched. If the thief had any use for it, I wouldn't mind."

"Mr. Archer! are you pulling my leg?"

"Indeed I am not. Every word is true that I'm saying."

"Well, I must say you take it very well," Adorée said. "If a thief went off with a pump of mine, I should be furious—and I should hope he couldn't make any use of it. And was it this that was making you so unhappy in Nîmes?"

"That, and the influence of the place. I think Nîmes is rather a depressing spot, without the sort of sparkle and romp which one expects of French towns. It felt to me as if it had come rather to disapprove of its own past even, and to look askance at the circus."

"I felt that too," Adorée agreed. "I don't wonder the Romans built a circus to cheer themselves up in Nîmes."

"To-morrow, when we go to Arles," Peter said innocently, "I'll show you a town which is quite as ancient and full of all sorts of history, and yet is deliciously young and gay and inconsequent, wearing its years and honours as a young girl might the family jewels and her grandmother's figured brocade. You'll love Arles."

"But—but are we going to Arles?" Adorée said.

"You are if you really want to cheer me up about the pump. We'll go just the same as to-day, only we'll lunch at the hotel."

"I'll ask Daddy. Daddy!"

The Professor, having duly regaled himself on the fruits and wines of some of the choicest orchards and vineyards in the world, was now leaning comfortably back against a slightly concave rock, with his pipe well alight. It is probable that, if he had been asked at that minute to go to 'Greenland's icy mountains' on the morrow, he would have replied, as he in fact now did, with a most gracious assent.

"Arles," he remarked, "is a most interesting town. There is not only an arena, very little if at all inferior to . . . but there is also . . ."

"Do you know," Adorée whispered to Peter, "I'm not a bit sure if two arenas on successive days will be good for Daddy!"

"We'll look after him together," Peter whispered back, rejoicing in the intimacy of the expression. "You'll adore Arles, Miss Lore. It's my choice of all Provence."

"It will have to be very nice," Adorée said, "if I'm to like it better than my darling Avignon. I suppose there is such a thing as love at first sight?"

"I'm absolutely sure of it," Peter agreed fervently.

"Well, that's how I felt about Avignon. In the evening especially, when the cafés are all lit up and full of bustle and chatter under the planes, I could sit and drink coffee forever. Where do you go for coffee in the evening, Mr. Archer?"

"Oh, here and there. But I'm hideously lonely wherever I go. May I join you and the Professor this evening?"

"But do. We shall be delighted . . . shan't we, Daddy? (Daddy's fast asleep!) We go to the Café de la Bourse, just opposite our hotel."

Peter Archer, becoming suddenly enormously cheerful, whether owing to the Châteauneuf-des-Papes or to some other cause, turned a sensational somersault backwards round the horizontal tree-trunk on which he was sitting.

CHAPTER VII

" My sweet leads : she knows not why, but now she loiters,
Eyes the bent anemones, and hangs her hands.
Such a look will tell that the violets are peeping,
Coming the rose : and unaware a cry
Springs in her bosom for odours and for colour,
Covert and the nightingale ; she knows not why."

LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

I.

"OH, what a little dream and duck of a town Arles is!" Adorée said, coming out on to the steps of the Hôtel Nord du Pinus, and gazing with delight at the frolic of sunny green leaves in the old square and at the animation of picturesque humanity.

Peter Archer, who had been to the garage to have an adjustment made in his hired car, was promptly at her side.

"What's become of the Professor?" he inquired. "I haven't seen him for ages."

"Daddy's in the hotel cellarage!" Adorée said. "He's been there ever since we came, and it will be hard to get him out—even for lunch. I've been to St. Trophyme: aren't the

cloisters heavenly? There was a notice in the church telling one to 'address oneself to the concierge,' but he was fast asleep—and so fat, poor darling!—I hadn't the heart, so I got round for nothing."

"Good business! But why, oh why, is the Professor in the cellar? That's what gets me. Wouldn't they bring the wine upstairs?"

"Mr. Archer! do you think my father is a sort of Silenus? Don't you know that the cellars of this hotel have been discovered to be a Roman forum and any number of catacombs? Daddy plunged below at once. I went too for a minute, but it all smelt so strong of bones and wine and rats and mice and cobwebs, that I came straight out again."

"Like Persephone back from Hades?"

"If you like. Daddy, however, was charmed with the Stygian shades—and smells. When I left him, he was sitting on a barrel with a Roman thigh-bone in one hand, a skull in the other, and quite a little beard of cobwebs sticking to his chin, on account of peering into every mousehole on the chance it might be another catacomb!"

"He's happy, however. What are you going to do now, if I may ask?"

"Me? I'm just going to mess about in these little old streets—beginning in that sweet little old shop over there where they sell postcards—till it's time to go and blow a trump for Daddy to resurrect."

"May I mess too?"

"If you're sure you wouldn't rather go to Hades."

"Thanks, but I very much prefer this sunshine. I rather draw the line at catacombs and the 'very ancient and fish-like smell' which prevails there as a rule. Sure I shan't be a nuisance?"

"Only if you go on asking silly questions. Oh, what a perfectly sweet old granny in the Arles coif! . . . Daddy declares it's Greek. . . . And she's going into my shop. Perhaps she keeps it. Come on: I want to talk to her."

"I wish I could speak French as well as you do," Peter said, impelled to pay some compliment and feeling this a safe one.

"I expect you know Latin, like Daddy. It isn't so much fun, but far more credit."

"Better a live dog than a dead lion! There's no one to talk to in Latin—even if I could talk it."

"Talk to the priests. They know it, I suppose."

"Oh, thanks: that would be exhilarating. No, I'd rather speak French and be able to talk to all these awfully jolly little kids."

"Are you fond of children?"

"Isn't everybody? But I'm a whole-hogger: I even like babies."

"What a model of a domestic man! Do they like you?"

"So hard to judge—from their expressions, I mean. I don't think they *dislike* me worse than they do other people."

"I'm going to try you on a baby. Coward if you run away!"

Adorée poured out a stream of laughing French to a passing Arlésienne peasant-mother: which ended in the transference into her arms of a very small collapsible infant of uncertain sex, and thence, after a deft caress or two, into Peter's. Peter bore it extremely pluckily; he kept his head and held the tiny morsel with some science, supporting its back with his hand, blandished the flicker of a smile from the tiny waxen face, and gave it back to a mother who was loud in her commendations.

"Good!" Adorée approved. "I think

babies do like you. Let's go and see if the nice old lady does who keeps the shop."

Inside the shop, Adorée bought postcards and souvenirs and chattered in her charming French to the old lady. Peter, unable to follow the talk, and several sizes too large for what remained of the shop, was distinctly out of it.

"What's she been on about?" he inquired of Adorée, after a long speech from the ancient Arlésienne, and much gesture.

"She's been telling me that once—when she was young herself—it was perfectly true what is said, you know, that all the girls of Arles are perfectly beautiful. Oh, but they were of a feature, a complexion, a shape—*incroyable*! But, alas, since the railway came to Arles, it appears there's been a sad falling off."

"What had the railway got to do with it? Did it black the complexions?"

"No, but it brought Tom, Dick and Harry into the town, and the girls of Arles married him—them, I mean—and so this generation isn't up to scratch. That's what she says."

"And what does she say now?" Peter asked suspiciously, for the old dame, after a glance in his direction, made some remark which set Adorée laughing.

"I don't think I ought to tell you! But oh, well . . . Well, she says that if all the ſtranger-men who came into Arles by the railway had been like a certain person—et cetera, and all the reſt of it, don't you know!"

"Much obliged to her, I'm sure. And what's that she's saying now?"

"Nothing—nothing at all!" Adorée had turned very pink. Her intereſt in the whatnots of Arles came to a sudden end, and, with rather syncopated adieux to Madame, she left the shop in a hurry.

"Phew!" she breathed outside. "It was hot in there! Do I look like a boiled lobſter?"

"Not in the leaſt."

"I feel like one. I'm glad you don't know French," Adorée said, after a pause. "Oh, not for any special reason. . . . I suppose I can be glad of what I like, can't I? It's a woman's language, I think. Isn't it silly, the way language goes by race and so on? There ought to be juſt two languages—a woman's and a man's: and the women would easily learn the man's, but the men would *never* learn the woman's."

"A moſt unfair arrangement!"

"No, it isn't: it's fair. Don't argue: I hate

people who argue. Women ought to have all the mysteries—all, all, all. All the misunderstandings arise through women's not having a language of their own to talk in."

"But how if the language wouldn't translate?" Peter asked, surprised and almost alarmed by her vehemence. "Where would the men be then?"

"Just where they are now. Because anyhow it won't! Men think it's the same because it has to use the same words, but it just isn't, and doesn't, and oughtn't! Oh, here's Daddy *at last*! Daddy *darling*, why did you leave me such a long time alone?"

"My dear child," said the Professor, "why, how flushed you are! You have been running about too much in the hot sun."

"I *haven't*, Daddy, and I'm *not*!"

"Of course not, my pet, if you say so. Now, down in those absorbing excavations," went on the Professor, "the air was most delicious and reminded me of a bassoon solo I used to hear rendered when I was a boy, entitled—charmingly, I thought—'In Cellar Cool.' Ah, Peter, so here you are! You have missed a great sight, my boy: you must really come back with me now and give me your opinion."

"No, Daddy, not just now. *I* want to give you *my* opinion, Daddy."

"But, my child, you have a horror of spiders!"

"No, I haven't—not when you're there, Daddy. I haven't a horror of anything when you're there, Daddy. Let's go down and see the cobwebs—and you can tell me about the bones."

"But what about Peter Archer?" asked the Professor, in a puzzled voice, and glancing from one to the other.

Peter was looking worried too, but non-committal.

"Oh, he doesn't want to come," Adorée said, clinging to her father. "I think he's going to St. Trophyme. . . . Didn't you say you were? Come along, Daddy. . . . Oh, I do so want to get underground."

2.

The car, expertly handled by Mr. Peter Archer, swooped into the Val d'Enfer, and Adorée looked up critically at the rugged crests of the 'Little Alps,' those enormous sea-cliffs on dry land.

"Why is it called the 'Valley of Hell'?"

she asked. "Is it because it all looks so *farouche*, or because the Counts des Baux were such very hot stuff?"

They were approaching the ruined citadel of the Counts des Baux.

Peter raced the engine a little in sheer lightness of heart; the little storm at Arles had blown quite over, and Adorée was at her friendliest again.

"A bit of both, I should think," Peter suggested.

"It looks," Adorée said, "as if two giants had been throwing stones at one another across the valley. Both were rotten shots, and all the stones hit somebody else in the middle."

"Like what used to be called an 'artillery duel' in the war," Peter said. "Which meant that two sets of guns went bang at a lot of poor chaps in the trenches in between. I used to think it was rather a jolly sort of duel—for the artillery!"

"I went to the Front once," remarked the Professor, joining in the conversation from the back, "as a lecturer to the troops. I confess I thought it a gratuitous aggravation of their manifold discomforts. But no sooner had I opened my mouth on my first word than off

went all the guns on both sides (or so, at least, it sounded), the Germans advanced in overwhelming force, my audience quitted the hearing of old history to go forth and make new, and I with the rest of the impedimenta was hurried to the rear."

"That would be Fritz's last, I expect?" Peter said. "1918?"

"That was when it was. I never delivered my lectures, for very shortly afterwards Marshal Foch found other ways of brightening things up."

"Capital entertainer, wasn't he, sir?"

"I was ridiculously young when the war was on," Adorée said. "I remember what worried me most was getting no sweets. I wish I had been old enough to be a nurse, or a motor-driver, or a Government clerk."

"You were quite all right as you were, I dare say," Peter said rather gruffly. "Little girls used to buck *me* up in those days more than anything. They really *did* seem worth fighting for. I pretty well knew all that tosh about a 'war to end war' wasn't going to amount to much, but I thought the little girls might."

"And do you think they have?"

"*Rather!*"

"Isn't he *nice*, Daddy?" Adorée whispered to her father, as Peter gave the engine another unharnessed run.

"It is no doubt an astonishing thing," remarked the Professor aloud, "but I seem only to encounter agreeable people. I am forever *reading* about disagreeable—for I am an interested student of contemporary literature in my spare time,—but somehow all that I actually meet are otherwise. A man of your years, Peter, probably has many opportunities denied us old professors: I wish you would tell me about these superlatively unpleasant people of whom one reads. Do they exist, in your experience? Or are they merely poetic embodiments of abstract evil, like the medieval devil?"

"I've met some pretty average blisters in my time," Peter admitted.

"How exciting!" Adorée said. "I wish I could meet a 'pretty average blister.' Tell us about them."

"What precisely is the definition of a 'blister'?" the Professor wanted to know.

"Look here!" Peter protested in haste. "This is Provence, and we are on holiday!

If there's to be any lecturing, you've got to do it, sir. Professor Archer's course on 'Blisters' is quite indefinitely postponed! Let me direct your attention to that which we came forth to see: the ancient citadel and town of Les Baux perched before us on a rock."

"Is it *quite* ruined, then?" Adorée asked, registering the subject of 'blisters,' to be resumed over evening coffee.

"There are about eighty inhabitants to-day, I believe," Peter answered, "and they live all among the ruins of a town which once numbered thousands. Les Baux was one of the toughest feudal nuts in all France; if the King didn't like what the Counts did, they simply got up there and shouted down to him over the battlements that he could jolly well lump it."

"What fun for them!"

"But they overreached themselves in the end."

"Actually? Over those high walls?"

"I'm afraid, only figuratively. One of them played it very low down on the city of Arles, betraying it for money, and that raised up a very deuce of a Nemesis, which dogged the Des Baux to their doom. . . . *Actum est!* They have been! But up there is where they

flourished when they did: and now, if this bus will oblige, we'll inspect what remains of their quarters."

3.

"Isn't it thrilling—and sad?" Adorée said, a little later, as, leaving the car, the party passed the old portals and took its way up a steep, narrow street of ruined houses whereof the crumbling doorways gaped on the desolation within like the dropped jaws of a corpse.

"'*Eheu, fugaces . . .*'" quoted the Professor, whose voice, like Adoree's, was a ghost of its usual self.

"Look!" Adorée said, peering into one of the houses, "there are rank nettles now all over the hearth, where I expect dear little babies used to kick about once! Why is it so awfully sad, Daddy, when there are no people any longer where there used to be people?"

"My dear child, I cannot tell you why," said the Professor, with whom the Middle Ages did not at all agree; "but that it is as you say I most deeply feel in this forsaken place. Yet we do but see here in strong relief what is true of all streets in every town, for every street is in a sense a ruined street, and we dwell and

tread always amid the forlorn vestige of former lives."

"Professor! *Professor!*" Peter said, in a shocked voice, "this is not like you at all, and I really can't allow it. What you want is a drink! And I won't be depressed about the babies either, Miss Lore. . . . If there are nettles where there used to be babies in one place, in another there are babies where there used to be nettles. On the whole, the nettles are getting the worst of it! Incidentally, we are much better off here this afternoon than if the Des Baux still flourished; they would probably have declared the Professor a spy, knocked us all on the side of the head, and thrown our 'forlorn vestige' over the wall!"

"And *that's* a bit of a drop!" Adorée said. "Gracious! what a view—what a view the Des Baux had! This ought to cheer you up, Daddy darling."

"My dear, my depression was but momentary. Peter's rebuke was finely to the point. I was being sentimental."

"Miss Lore," Peter said, taking a step forward, "would you resent my issuing one sharp and peremptory order? You are *not* to go so near the edge! It gives me palpita-

tions of the—heart, to see you swaying on what appears to be the giddy verge of a precipice."

"I'm not at all the fainty sort, if that's what you're afraid of. But if it will really make you feel happier, I'll lie down flat—like so—and look over that way. It's a kind of peep-Baux!"

"I have your permission to grab your feet if I think you peep-Baux too far?"

"My shoes might come off."

"So they might! Your ankles, then? On that understanding you may approach the edge—flat, please, and slowly."

"Isn't he masterful, Daddy? Does this come of having been in the Army?"

"It proceeds from native caution, and from—several other emotions."

"For my part," said the Professor, "I am contented with the view from where I stand. What richness! What fertility! What strong colour! Look at the orchards, the vineyards, the patches of corn, and observe how they are all in among the very rocks themselves! I admire that tenacious husbandry which wrests, as it were, a grape from thorns and a fig from thistles. A landscape to me is twice beautiful when man has wrought upon

its grace and among its grandeurs, to his just enrichment."

"I wonder," said the voice of Adorée, from over the edge where her head now projected, "how many hostile armies have marched upon Les Baux across that tremendous plain! I should love to have seen one coming—the sun glinting on the armour and the swords, and the Mistral tossing the knights' plumes about! Even a quite big army must have looked from up here just like a ripple of the Solent seen from the bridge of a huge Atlantic liner."

"It's a pity the King of France hadn't got a siege-gun," Peter said. "That would have 'larned' the Des Baux!"

"I'm glad he hadn't. I don't like modern war. I think it's a very poor thing to knock a place down from ten miles away."

"It's a very poor thing for the people in the town," Peter agreed, keeping a watchful eye on Adorée's feet. "But really, you know," he went on, "it must have been fairly exasperating for law and order to have absolutely no resource against people like the Des Baux. Personally, unless I'd happened to be born a Des Baux myself, I should have absolutely barred the blighters."

"Daddy," Adorée said, still stretched out flat with her head far over the edge, "what is a 'Rendez-vous d'Amour'?"

"What is a *what*, my dear?"

"That's what the guidebook calls it. The Des Baux had one somewhere about here."

"You bet they did!" Peter said, *sotto voce*.

"What does it mean, Daddy? What did the Des Baux do there?"

"Well, my dear"—the Professor cast a harassed eye over the unresponsive landscape—"doesn't the name suggest the use of such a place? They no doubt used it for the purpose of—er—meeting the—ladies they admired from time to time. A feudal lord had—er—great opportunities for . . . he, as it were . . ."

"Like sitting out at a dance, I suppose?" Adorée suggested.

"Very like that, my dear. The Counts Des Baux doubtless sat there very often—in the cool of the evening."

"What happened, Daddy, if the lady wouldn't come?"

"My dear, the Des Baux were not Troubadours, you know: they were mighty men of war and great feudal chiefs. In the very

remote contingency to which you allude, something in the nature of a Sabine Rape doubtless took place."

"I don't think I like the Des Baux! What would you have done, Daddy, if one of them had gone off with me?"

"Your father, Miss Lore," said Peter, with promptitude, "would immediately inform the doughty knight, Sir Peter Archer. Which Sir Peter, incontinently giving chase, would have knocked the Des Baux's hat off, likewise blacked his eyes for him. There would then be a marvellous great tourney, at which all the world and its dame attended, wherein the said Sir Peter and the Des Baux debated the matter according to rule and custom, with foynings and hurtlings fearful to see and a great shivering of lances, swords and battle-axes: whereof all who saw had great delight. And, behold, the Des Baux lost first one leg and then the other, so that he could hardly stand; and first one arm and then the other, so that it was all he could do to hold his glaive,—and then his head: whereat all that gentle company waxed marvellous merry."

"Oh, how nice!" Adorée cried, clapping her hands. "I'm so glad you know Mallory.

Do go on, please. What did Sir Peter do then ?"

" Can you ask ? What he had contracted to do—else were he exile for ever from the Goodly Company of the Table Round. He restored the lady to her father, and she went back to Cambridge and clean forgot all about him."

" Do you think she did ? I think she wrote him a postcard now and then."

" Did she ?"

" I don't know. You see, it's your story, not mine."

" Let's collaborate, shall we ? My manuscript says the lady wrote Sir Peter a letter . . . several letters. In fact, they became regular correspondents."

" Yours is a later version, I think. My manuscript only mentions a postcard."

" But in my manuscript," put in the Professor, with a smile, " which has been exhaustively compared with other sources in the British Museum, it says that the aged father of the lady invited Sir Peter to come and look them up in Cambridge. Nothing is said, however, as to whether he did."

" Wonderful how the trained historical mind

sees into things!" Peter said. "Yours is the authentic script, sir. It only wants a little supplementing from one in the possession of a private gentleman in London—which reads, in extra-large uncials with illuminated capitals, 'And Sir Peter thanked the Father of the Fair Lady from his heart, and astonished—and even bored them a little—by the speed and high frequency of his visits to Cambridge.'"

CHAPTER VIII

"Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,
I would speak my heart out: heaven is my need."

* * * * *

"Sweeter unpossessed, have I said of her my sweetest?
Not while she sleeps: while she sleeps the jasmine breathes,
Luring her to love; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Bears me to her pillow under white rose-wreaths."

LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

I.

"I'VE got it badly," Peter said to himself, "and it's beginning to hurt like blazes!"

He was sitting alone at a table on the pavement outside the Café de la Bourse, sipping his after-dinner coffee and cognac.

"I've got it *damn* badly," he repeated; "and I'm a fool for my pains! Because she is only a child, after all, and absolutely devoted to her father. I am probably just the sort of elder-brother holiday friend a child like that always makes wherever she goes. Yet I've got it—*badly*. So what's to be done?

"She likes me," he resumed. "Oh yes, she

likes me! And that is strong point Number One. But then I expect she likes most people who are reasonably agreeable: and who wouldn't be, with a little angel like that? She likes me, however, just a shade better than just that: witness, her sudden turning tail at Arles! Yes, she likes me with a decimal-point three figures of difference. But then, good Lord, don't girls run through dozens of slightly emotional friendships before they find the real thing? I wish to heaven I didn't seem to know such a bally lot about young girls! . . . I wonder, now, if I really do?

"Our grandmothers," Peter reflected desperately, "often married at eighteen! . . . and there was practically no divorce in those days: *ergo*, they were old enough to know their own minds. *She* is old-fashioned. . . . Oh, I know her hair is short, bless her, and her skirts, and that she apes all the ultra-modern ways: but she is fundamentally old-fashioned, all the same. Living all her life in the Professor's big, loose pocket!—of course, she is old-fashioned.

"Being in love," Peter continued, "does make one notice girls. How *dreadfully* attractive they are! Yes, I like modern fashions. . . .

Adoree wouldn't be Adoree in any others. What utter rot! . . . She would be just herself however she was dressed. But I'm glad girls dress as they do. Why are parsons so down on it? It isn't immodest. Do they want all the world to look as fusty as themselves? *Gracious!* (as *she* says) how pretty Avignon is, with the lights on under the trees! . . . How gay the people seem, and how cheerful that ridiculous orchestra is! I never saw such blue darkness as there is here, or such enormous yellow stars. A week ago—only a week! heigh-ho—I sat like this and felt quite normal and ordinary. And now! . . .

"Being in love is an absurd state. We talk about '*falling* in love,' because we know how it hurts! But if it's a fall, it's a fall upwards, not downwards: man is tallest on his knees. Only a week ago! . . . and now I cannot remember an existence, I cannot conceive of a state, from which this thing were altogether absent! I have strayed out of time into eternity.

"The fairy-tales," Peter told himself, "are *so* true. Nobody *could* dance in Cinderella's slippers except Cinderella. One *is* caught in cobwebs, beanstalks *do* shoot up to the sky. *She* said there should be a language of women

only. . . . Is there, I wonder, a language of love? What would it be like?

"The conjunctions," Peter said to himself, "would be hard in that language. The substantives are fatally easy to decline. Subjunctives, and all the elaborate syntax of hypothesis, that is easy; it is the plain present indicative that confounds! As for the Future! . . . But isn't there a tense called the 'Future Perfect'?

"Thank God, thank God," Peter cried with sudden fervour, "I'm an only son! If the fairy-tales *are* true, there should be hope for me. In the fairy-tales, of course, I should get a chance of *doing* something to win her. But nowadays, what is there to do? Yet I honestly think that a balance at the Bank, as things go to-day, is almost as great an achievement as killing an odd ogre or two.

"And then," Peter bethought himself, "not so very long ago one *did* get a chance of doing *something*. Not much, not more than other men; but enough perhaps to give one the right to approach any woman as a man. I didn't know her then . . . she was only a little girl: but I did have the idea of her in my soul—yes, I did have that. She is the fulfilment of the

vision I had, which kept me going. She was my Aslauga. Is it my fault if she turns out to be real?

"What is she doing now, I wonder? Is that her light at the hotel-window? She does all the ordinary things, I suppose. . . . I suppose so. I wish I were the shoes on her feet. . . . But no, for she would take me off! I wish I were the hair on her head! I wish I were any mortal thing that is intimately and always close, close to her adorableness!

"Oh, God," Peter cried to the yellow stars, "give me her love—give me her love!"

2.

His cry was so nearly aloud that he started back, almost in panic, at sight of the Professor standing beside him.

"Ah, Peter, my boy," said the Professor, with his entirely kind smile, "I counted on finding you here—meditating, no doubt, on your thesis of Ideal Love. Coffee, I see—and cognac: an admirable combination! You are going to join me in another mingling of the same? What a perfect evening! Adoree has gone to bed early; she was a little tired after our delightful excursion this afternoon."

"Nothing the matter, sir?"

"Nothing whatever: a healthy desire of sleep. Motoring in the Mistral is more potent than poppies. I feel it myself, but I am old, Peter, and life still enchants me, so, instead of seeking my pillow, I am out on the pavement looking for cognac and conversation. One must be very young to forgo an evening like this for even the sweetest oblivion. Life homes in our hands when we are young, Peter; we need not set traps for it."

"I am sure you need never set traps, sir. Life follows life, I think, as money is said to follow money. It will always rally round you. But I am so glad you came out to-night: I was hoping you would."

"Now, that," said the Professor, "is really good hearing. Youth pays age a great compliment when it feels like that."

"*Vice versa*, sir. I object to this exaggerated deference for youth. What is it, after all, but mere fewness of years?"

"I do not know what it is," returned the Professor, smiling, "but I am quite sure it is not mere fewness of years. I live too close to it to cherish that delusion. Youth is no negative, but a strong positive, which all of us feel,

moſt of us love, and some of us fear a little. I am often fearful, at home in Cambridge, of appearing like Polonius to my daughter's numerous young friends—'of plentiful lack of wit,' you remember? Whereas I would fain keep the spirit of old Sam Johnson. What a great and good man that was! What an Englishman! His zeſt for life did not diminish as age and infirmity increased upon him, but his sense of its myſtery grew greater—almoſt too great. He was glad, as many of us are, to tarry among the harbour-lights and casual voices when the course was outward for the ultimate sea."

"Aren't we all in the same boat, sir?"

"Yes and no, my dear boy. We are all bound outwards, certainly, and nothing can ſtay our course. But in our youth as yet the river-banks are close to us, the sea seems far away: what we think of in our solitary hours is the next port of call—marriage, it may be, domeſtic joys, worldly advancement, the coming of our children, their growing up around us. But with the old these things are behind: what they feel when alone is the ſtrange lift of the opening sea beneath them, the ſtir of the wind upon the pathless waters. There is an

excitement about it, a stimulation; yet one is seldom sorry to turn the face backwards for a while towards the lights and laughter of the familiar shore. Ah, and here is the cognac! . . . Merci, merci bien, garçon—or is it *beaucoup*? How does the thesis progress, Peter? What of the Troubadours and Ideal Love?"

"Do you know, sir," Peter said, shifting his position a little so that the light did not shine on his face, "I'm rather fed up with the Troubadours. I'm beginning to think that Ideal Love is all vapour and moonshine."

"My dear boy!"

"What I mean is, sir, it's puerile to go idealising about a thing which is necessarily either real or nothing. It's like those silly asses who gas about the beauty of the child-mind, and have never minded a real live child for two minutes together. The verb *to Love* is essentially transitive: the intransitive use is sheer moonshine. It's easy to love ideally—that is, to fall in love with the supposed beauty of one's own thoughts; the thing is, can we love *really*—one woman—till death do us part? All the Troubadours and all Petrarch is worth less than one silver wedding celebrated in real happiness and sincere thanksgiving."

"My dear Peter," said the Professor, smiling all over his face, "this is no matter for a thesis. It is sheer common sense!"

"It's most *un*common sense with me, sir. I expect you see what it means?"

"It can hardly mean but one thing."

"One thing and one person, sir! Oh, I know I've only known her a week, and that she is far too young, and that it's most beastly hard lines on you, sir. But what is one to do? She would have to wear a mask and—and a gag, if it were not to happen! Will you give me your advice, sir?—not as her father, but just as an older man. Most people would be incapable of such unselfish detachment, but I know you are not. I am absolutely full of compunction; I do see that it is a kind of shadow falling on her youth and innocence."

"My dear boy," replied the Professor, without the slightest alteration in his mild and cordial expression, "do not get excited and upset yourself. Let us crack a bottle of wine together . . . *in vino veritas!* . . . Cognac is no beverage. Why should it be a shadow that has fallen upon Adorée through your love for her? . . . Or, let it be a shadow, and say that under that shadow the sun shall not smite

her by day, neither the moon by night. If my sister, Adorée's worthy Aunt Isabel, were to overhear me, she would be very angry, but I must own nevertheless that, in matters of this kind, it has never seemed to me that either time, or youth, or parents' loss, is of much account. We fall out of time when we fall in love, and one day in love's sight may well be as a thousand years. Nor is youth necessarily a drawback, though it may be a reason for caution and for the utmost tender circumspection of approach. As for my own hard lines,—well, Peter, though I do not like to compare myself with Polonius, I have long realised that there would be *harpers* on my daughter."

"I never met *anybody* more entirely unlike Polonius than you, sir," Peter said. "You are the kindest and most generous man alive."

"You asked for the advice of an older man," the Professor said, patting Peter's hand where it lay extended on the table, "and I will give it you, even though in doing so I risk that odious comparison again. It is this. Don't, my dear boy, afflict yourself unnecessarily; don't consider other people too closely in this purely personal matter (a form of pride); and, above all, *don't*

be in too great a hurry! Choose your times prudently. *Festina lente!* You have been a soldier, Peter, and you have no doubt heard of that subtle strategist, Fabius Maximus Cunctator. Bear him in mind."

"Then you don't hate me, sir? You are not going to dash away out of it? Good God, I . . ."

"Here is the wine," said the Professor, tranquilly: "Châteauneuf, I perceive! They are getting to know me at the Café de la Bourse! Merci, merci, garçon. Ah, how red it is! Health and long life, Peter, my dear fellow—and all the joy you can desire!"

CHAPTER IX

"Heartless she is as the shadow in the meadows
Flying to the hills on a blue and breezy noon.
No, she is athirst and drinking up her wonder:
Earth to her is young as the slip of the new moon.
Deals she an unkindness, 'tis but her rapid measure,
Even as in dance; and her smile can heal no less:
Like the swinging May-cloud, that pelts the flowers with hailstones
Of a sunny border, she was made to bruise and bless."

LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

I.

"WE owe it to you, Peter," said the Professor, settling back very much at his ease against the substantial upholstery of a P.L.M. motor-coach, "that we have discovered this luxurious and agreeable mode of travel. How much to be preferred to a stuffy railway carriage is this fine open chariot! Yet, though I have very often observed these handsome vehicles standing outside stations, I do not think it would ever have occurred to me that they were intended for my convenience."

"I'm quite sure it never would, darling," Adorée agreed. "Daddy is so funny, Mr.

Archer," she went on to Peter, "he never can believe that anything is meant for him. I think he must have had it impressed upon him when he was a little boy that things were to look at, not touch,—and it set up a complex; because even now he is capable of standing and *talking about* an ordinary tramcar, pointing out the beauty of its construction and the admirable slope of its trolley,—and then he sets out and walks the whole way, with the twopence that his next-of-kin gave him clutched in his hand!"

"'Blessed are the meek,'" Peter said, with a glance of affection at the smiling subject of this speech, "'for they shall inherit the earth.' But why in all the world," he added, becoming suddenly very masculine, "don't they get a move on this old thing? It's ten minutes past time already, and apparently nobody else is coming. But surely they can't be going to manœuvre this huge contraption all the way to Aigues Mortes for just three ordinary-sized people! Miss Lore, you know what my French is like when I'm feeling petulant! . . . *Will* you talk to the chauffeur for me? Give him my love and say I *am* so looking forward to seeing Aigues Mortes."

"'I know that I can save the country, and I know that no other man can!' It was William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, who said that . . . conceited thing! All right. . . . But what a hurry you are in! I expect you're one of those time-fiends (like my Aunt Isabel) who hoard minutes and grudge seconds!"

Adorée and the chauffeur gesticulated apart together for a while, with bright smiles—and she went on:

"Isn't he a sweet thing? He's married and has three children, and he lives at Tarascon. Oh, and he thinks the other people aren't going to come, because it's *beau petit temps*, so he'll have to go back to the garage for a smaller car for just us. Isn't that jolly? We shall be all on our own! I was so afraid those lackadaisical Americans might be coming again. . . . You know, the ones who kept on drearily telling one another how they'd seen it all before and didn't think it had improved with keeping!"

"Oh, that lot," Peter said, as the car proceeded back to the garage. "I expect they are dead by now. They were just on the point of expiring when we knew them."

"Or damned!" Adorée said. "By which I mean, gone on to the Riviera."

"Hallo! What's the grouse against the Côte d'Azur? I should have thought you would rather like it—gaiety, life, and what not?"

"Daddy and I were there last winter for an obscure and dismal fortnight. Aunt Isabel made us go. It was dreadful! You know the sort of English person who thinks there's no one in the whole world but itself? . . . Well, there he and she were, thinking it. They come down in Blue Trains, shoals of them, to the Blue Coast, and they blue money, pots of it, and they are blue themselves. I don't think there's anything so depressing as a Very Rich Person—caught, as the *Bystander* catches them, with one leg stuck out and their mouths open, in the act of being Very Rich. Daddy and I legged it for the Pyrenees and hid behind a mountain. Didn't the mountains feel *kind*, Daddy, after the Gorgons?"

"It was Persian, Peter," the Professor testified, "quite Persian. A meaningless luxury, unassimilated, without gusto. At night, particularly, the faces were like hard masks. I am not a specially timid man, I hope, but I own to being frightened by brainlessness.

It was my sister, Adorée's Aunt Isabel, who wished us to go; she said it would be good for Adorée to see life. But, as I told her . . ."

"You mean, darling—as you *would have* told her, and as you told me you were *going to* tell her, if you had dared!"

"Very likely, my dear. But, as I meant to tell your Aunt, *life* is precisely what you do *not* see on the Riviera. You only see galvanised lethargy—an over-oiled sluggishness forever being cranked up."

"And oh," Adorée shuddered, "the over-oiled slugs!"

"It's clear, then," Peter said, "that that is where our Americans have gone, for a clearer case of 'over-oiled sluggishness' I never saw in all my life."

2.

"Well," Adorée said, a little later, "I'm sure I'm very much obliged to our unknown companions for *being* unknown and *not* being our companions." She spoke from the back seat of a swift tourer, in which the party was now racing along the Provençal roads in the direction of Tarascon.

"They deserve a hearty vote of thanks,"

Peter agreed. "And so does the—what did you call the weather, Mademoiselle Française?"

"Beau petit temps! Sort of sub-fine, don't you know: might rain, but probably won't."

"It is just the weather for Aigues Mortes," said the Professor; "it is the most pensive little town I was ever in, and a pensive sky best becomes it."

"Why is Aigues Mortes so pensive, Daddy? Did something sad happen there once?"

"I think we will put it," the Professor answered, "that something very glad and glorious did *not* happen there. I should call it the town of Hope Deferred."

"And that is sad enough, in all conscience," Peter said.

"It was at Aigues Mortes," the Professor told Adorée, "that the Christian host assembled for the last Crusade, that of St. Louis, and the warriors were ferried out across the *aigues mortes* or dead waters to their argosy that stood upon the sea. It is easy to imagine what high hopes were entertained of that enterprise, led as it was by a saint, a king of blameless life and pure ambition. But those hopes were not realised; the Crusade was a wretched and ignominious failure, redeemed only by the

shining qualities of its leader,—and it effected nothing. The very great and glorious thing which did *not* happen to Aigues Mortes was the victory of the host which had drawn the eyes of the world towards it, and the return thither in triumph of St. Louis from the Holy Wars. The little town has been asleep ever since."

"It sounds like the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty in the fairy-tale," Adorée said.

"Yes, my dear, it will never wake until the coming of the Prince, who tarries. But if he came, it would still be fair and fitting for his reception, for it has waxed not nor waned, nor altered at all in any way, for seven hundred years. If St. Louis might behold it again, as we shall to-day, he would know it at once for the same town that he left when he departed eastward as Captain of the last Crusade."

"Poor little Aigues Mortes!" Adorée said. "And it has waited for St. Louis all these years! And all it gets is tourists like us!"

"And if it gets nothing worse," Peter said stoutly, "it does exceedingly well, in my opinion. It is better to dream of a saint who never comes, than to be broad-awake thinking of a millionaire who turns up with great regularity at the same time every year."

"St. Louis went off, according to the lights of his time," the Professor said, "to deliver the Holy City from its bonds, but he left a little holy city behind him, had he known it, bound to him for ever in perfect love. There can be no such thing as failure in such men as St. Louis, for goodwill towards all, and the high heart of faith and courage, are in themselves the greatest of all achievements."

"I had to write an essay at school once," Adorée said, "on 'Splendid Failure.' Some of the girls didn't know what it meant: but I did."

"What did you write about?" Peter asked, with immense interest.

"About Captain Scott in the Antarctic. But that was a failure *so* splendid. . . . I got all mixed up: because, you see, one had Amundsen's success to measure it by. I said what Daddy has just said, only I said it all frightfully badly . . . that poles and things don't matter, but pulling a sledge along and being brave does. Then it struck me that that sounded horribly priggish, so I tried to show that there *isn't* a pole really, when you come to it—never: but it's inside us. I know it sounds absurd to talk about a pole inside us. . . .

The girls all laughed, but Miss Swithun didn't; she said there *was* a pole inside her."

"So there is inside me," Peter said, "a long one. The Kingdom of Heaven is inside us, so I don't see why a pole shouldn't be too. Everything that matters is inside. Amundsen performed a fine feat, but, if he had gone North instead of South, as he is said to have intended, he couldn't have been much further away from the continent where Scott adventured. The Holy City of St. Louis was within him, and he released it all right. The pole *is* inside, but I can quite understand one's being rather up it in trying to say so."

"He's very understanding, isn't he, Daddy?" Adorée said, with a look at Peter which removed his interior pole to the Equator. "I think you would like Miss Swithun," she went on to Peter. "She was English at school, you know. I was awfully keen on her. She is so nice, somebody ought to marry her; when you come to see us in Cambridge I shall introduce you to her."

Peter's interior pole froze again and gave him a sore dig into the bargain. He was silent.

"We are on the fringe of the great plain of La Camargue," remarked the Professor, a

little later: "observe how flat everything is becoming!"

"I had observed it," Peter said.

3.

"Are you musical, Mr. Archer?" Adorée inquired across the table, as the three were just finishing their *déjeuner* in the little Auberge St. Louis, Aigues Mortes.

"It rather depends on what you mean," Peter replied, rousing himself from a certain speechlessness to do it. "If you mean, am I emotionally susceptible to beautiful sounds, the answer is, very; but if you mean, do I like concerts, the answer must be, no."

"Neither do I, Peter," the Professor said. "I always want the curtain to go up after the first piece, however good the programme is."

"The reason I mentioned it," Adorée said, "is because Aigues Mortes reminds me of a piece of music—in the minor, played on muted strings. There's a sort of *pianissimo* about everything. I feel somehow as if we were right down under deep water here—'full fathom five'—and seeing things queerly, like through water, and not hearing anything at all. This very room seems to be full of green water,

and those people over there move in it like fishes, opening and shutting their mouths without a sound."

"It's really a wonder to me," Peter said, "that we are *not* under water. What hinders the sea from inundating this absolute abjection of earth, I simply cannot imagine. The Mediterranean is old, of course, and unenterprising; but if the land tried on this lying down game with the Atlantic, it would soon have fishes all over it—that's all!"

"Most of this coast country hereabouts *was* reclaimed from the sea," the Professor said; "and these vast dilated shallows, called the 'Dead Waters,' are its legacy."

"You find it rather *triste* down here, don't you, Mr. Archer?" Adorée said. "You haven't seemed quite yourself for some time. Does La Camargue oppress you?"

"I suppose it must be that," Peter said. "These stupendous plains are a bit overwhelming. I had an awful feeling as we were coming along that I was fated to travel for ever and ever, and get nowhere. I felt that all progress was imaginary: a mere rushing from nowhere to nowhere in boundless and meaningless space."

"How horrid! Try a cup of coffee."

"Yes, I think I will. But, good Lord!" Peter exclaimed in dismay, as Madame produced the vessel; "what an extraordinary contrivance! Is it really a coffee-cup? How does one get in at it?"

"It looks to me like a model in metal of a fortified tower," remarked the Professor, putting on his near-sight glasses to examine more closely the curious object which had been placed before Peter.

"It's alive! It's gurgling at me!" Peter cried, backing away from the thing. "Take it away, somebody—please!"

"The sound, I should conceive, is the liquid subsiding off the grounds," said the Professor, sympathetically. "Try raising the lid."

"It won't raise, and it's as hot as blazes! Why do they fortify the coffee in Aigues Mortes?"

"'Address yourself to the concierge!'" Adorée suggested.

"Where does he live? Is that his voice, do you think, that I hear inside? Miss Lore, you understand French: do speak to this very French coffee-cup for me."

"The top part lifts from the middle, I think," said the Professor, who had been edging up closer to the mystery.

"It does, b'Jove! And . . . ye gods! what a funny little tumbler full of coffee! Fancy subjecting anybody to all that mental anguish for about half a mouthful of coffee! I must have some cognac now, to restore my nerve. . . . That's the dodge, I daresay! Professor, join me?"

"By all means! But what a monument of a thing! I am reminded of the admirable humours of Heath Robinson."

"It's done you good, Mr. Archer," Adorée said. "You seem quite stimulated."

"Mere seeming, I am afraid—the hectic flush of fever. I am still abysmally depressed, Miss Lore."

"May one ask why?"

"Certainly one may. . . . In fact, one should. I *think* it is because you told me in the car that you wanted me to marry your friend—the same that was 'English' at school."

"She is pretty and nice. I don't see why that should depress you."

"It does, all the same. I don't believe

in ' arranged ' marriages, and I think it is very unkind of you to want to palm me off on a friend."

" Unkind to the friend ?"

" If you like. But unkind to me too. I could never take to a lady who was ' English ' at school and has a pole inside her. . . . I know too many ladies like that!"

" Now you are making fun of my essay."

" I deny it. I am not. But I've got a pole of my own which juts out like a bow-sprit. We should be poles apart and polar in our relations. Also, I don't like the name ' Swithun '; it suggests rain for forty days. Please withdraw the lady, and promise on no account to introduce me to her when I come to Cambridge."

" Very well, then, Mr. Peter Archer! I shall introduce you instead to my Aunt Isabel! She'll settle you up!"

" Just what I want! I can see that Aunt Isabel and I will get on capitally."

" Don't be too sure. She thinks the modern young man is very conceited."

" Discerning of her! So he is. I shall enjoy a chat with Aunt Isabel about the modern young man."

"Oh, and she thinks people ought to go to church."

"So they ought—on one occasion, at least."

"And she thinks Daddy is very feckless and I am very frivolous."

"Dear old lady, how right she seems always to be! I am going to take her one of these patent coffee-cups as a present; it will keep her interested on the long winter evenings."

"Isn't he maddening, Daddy?" Adorée said, tossing her hair at Peter. "He won't know Miss Swithun, who is so clever and nice; and he will know Aunt Isabel, who isn't either. What are we to do with him?"

"Take him out to see Aigues Mortes, I should think," said the Professor, rising with a smile. "We are rather neglecting St. Louis."

4.

"Isn't he sweet?" Adorée said.

She referred to the *Gardien* of the Ramparts, a little sallow-faced, one-legged ex-soldier of France, who, on their 'addressing themselves to the concierge,' according to instructions, came forth from the gate-house to conduct them, with the peculiarly sweet and radiant smile which was characteristic of him.

"He is like everything else in this town," Adorée continued, "and makes me think of St. Louis. I'm sure St. Louis was pale and had eyes just like that."

"Ask him where he lost his leg," Peter said. "At Verdun? Thought as much!"

"It is to have great rights in one's country," the Professor said, "to have enriched its soil with a living limb."

"I am afraid, sir, too many of our men have found it is to have great wrongs."

"Monsieur le Gardien," Adorée announced, "wishes to clasp Monsieur the hand! That's you, Mr. Archer. I've been telling him how you, too, fought in France."

"Pleased, I'm sure."

Peter blushed, and he and the little Frenchman solemnly shook hands: their manner in doing so aptly illustrating the difference in national temperament, for while Peter looked exceedingly embarrassed, the Gardien wore an air of genuine exaltation. Adorée and the Professor smiled approval upon this tableau.

"I do wish I had had my camera," Adorée said, as the party now moved on towards the Tower of Constance, "to take St. George and

St. Louis shaking hands. Wasn't it thrilling, Daddy? Mr. Archer is so English, and the little Gardien so French—and they're both so sweet; it made quite a picture, didn't it?"

"I thought it a very agreeable incident indeed," agreed the Professor. "But I confess I prefer my recollection of it to any photographic record."

"Yes, darling, but I can't show your recollection of it to the girls in Cambridge. And I do so like them to know the romantic things that happen to you and me abroad. Mr. Archer, have you got a photograph of yourself in uniform?"

"Several. Why?"

"Men look so nice in uniform."

"If it will really give you the slightest satisfaction," Peter said, "I'll rout one out for you at once. I warn you I have a moustache and present, on the whole, a rather Prussian appearance."

"How sweet!"

"What? Sweet to look Prussian?"

"No, but sweet to look so deceptive. You aren't a bit Prussian really, you know."

"What am I like?"

"Now, Mr. Vanity!"

"No, honestly. I only wanted to know how I seem to you, in an ordinary way."

"In an ordinary way? Daddy, what sort of a person does he seem to us, in an ordinary way? Well, you seem a tall person with a brown face, wavy hair, and very brown eyes which look straight out. You're a very understanding person, jolly to talk to and have about, —and we think you're very kind. We should say you know your way about the world quite fairly well, and we think you're probably by no means a fool at your job, whatever it is. But you're very impulsive. There, does that content you? Now, what sort of a person do *we* seem to *you*—in an ordinary way, of course?"

"Which? You or your father?"

"Both together! We are a sort of composite person, Daddy and I: I'm the young-feminine of Daddy, and he's the older-masculine of me."

"So that's the way of it, is it? Well, the composite so presented strikes me as not in an ordinary way at all."

"Oh yes, very clever and all that. But you won't get out of it like that. I might have said that you didn't appear in an ordinary way either (I'm quite clever enough, and you don't),

but I could see what you were pining for was a really going-into-details compliment, so I buckled to and paid it. And so must you. Do it this minute, before I count ten: one . . . two . . ."

"Well," Peter began, "when I first set eyes on you two in—in the Palace of the Popes, wasn't it?—says I to myself, says I: 'Jove, there is a . . . there are a . . . I mean, there are two interesting-looking people!' You looked so utterly unlike the rest of the crowd, who were all—well, just people gaping at things and shuffling about. I had an idea I had seen the Professor somewhere, and you can guess if I racked my brains to remember where! But even if I hadn't recognised him, I'd have scraped acquaintance somehow. You've no idea how often you were restored to your father half-drowned out of the Rhone, or he to you badly singed out of a burning house, during that half-hour or so when I was following you about! Then, when I did place your father, I felt like stout Cortez—chap with the 'eagle eye,' in the poem, you remember. It was a clear case of 'Friend, go up higher.' So I cantered up at once and introduced myself, in a way that showed I'd been nicely brought up.

And the Professor was most awfully kind, but you weren't. You turned into a perfect little stalactite and walked away with your nose in the air."

"Stalactites have very long noses, and they wear them turned down."

"Well, you have a very short nose, and you wore it turned up."

"I can't help it: it's a snub nose."

"You made it snubber."

"Oh, blow my . . . I mean, bother my nose! Go on with your compliment."

"There isn't any more—yet," Peter said. "It's a serial compliment. All I can say now is, that now we do know one another and are good friends for all our lives (I hope), I simply cannot imagine how I contrived to exist before."

"Gracious!" Adorée said, her eyes very round. "Do you really like us as much as all that?"

"The whole thing is an understatement," Peter said gruffly.

"It's ever so nice of you," Adorée said, ever so lightly touching Peter's jacket-sleeve with the tips of her fingers—a contact which sent strong electric currents right up into his neck. "And of course we are going to go on being

friends. And when you come to Cambridge, I won't introduce you to Miss Swithun—though she is ripping and you'd like her awfully. . . ."

"I should hate her."

"You wouldn't, really. You couldn't."

"Oh, couldn't I! You've no idea what I can do when I try."

"Well, anyhow," Adorée said, "I won't introduce you to her . . . only to some of the girls: because I want them to see you."

"And the Gardien wants *you*," put in the Professor, "to see the Tower of Constance! He left his good dinner to show you it."

"Darling little Gardien! We're neglecting him shamefully! What a lovely tower! Who was Constance?"

5.

"So that even if the invaders did get in," Adorée said, gazing around at the interior of the Tower of Constance, "the people inside could still pour boiling oil on them and jump out from all these corners and kill them! What a good arrangement! Isn't it, Daddy?"

"It is called 'machicolation,' my dear, and was an admirable defensive device."

"And fancy St. Louis thinking it all out!—machico-what's-its's-name, I mean. I should have thought a saint would be too busy saying prayers."

"*Laborare est orare*, my dear. St. Louis was a soldier and a king, as well as a saint."

"I love St. Louis. Are there any men like him nowadays?"

"The world is full to-day, my dear, of men who have led others in war."

"So it is! Isn't that splendid! Why, there are two in this very tower at this minute! Mr. Archer was a captain, acting-major (doesn't it sound theatrical?)—and I'm sure the little Gardien was something important. . . . Just look at all his medals!"

"But neither of us, I dare say," Peter said, "is a saint."

"What exactly *is* being a saint?" Adorée asked her father. "I'm not sure if I know."

"It is, I suppose," the Professor answered, "to have a genius for the spiritual, just as Napoleon had a genius for war and Shakespeare for the poetic observation of human character."

"It's just something one is born with, then?"

"One is born with the potentiality, no doubt," the Professor said; "but I hardly think any perfected gift can be described as 'just something one is born with.'"

"But what could a spiritual genius do with that gift, except become awfully good with it? That's what I'm trying to get at."

"Mightn't he become awfully bad with it?" Peter suggested. "Most of these things work both ways. A gift is only power, in the first place."

"Well, then," Adorée persisted, "might Napoleon have used his genius for war to make peace?"

"Certainly he might," the Professor said; "and, in fact, at his best period he did. There has never been a more constructive law-giver —and law is peace on the political plane. Sanctity, I think, is great original power, inspired and directed by the love of God. That same great original power might have been directed by many other motives."

"I'm beginning to see," Adorée said.

"Poets, saints and lovers," her father pursued; "these are closely akin. We are all saints in a measure when we love truly and well something in itself lovely and of good report.

Almoſt every man is a poet at some time in his life, and many more than we think are saints. I often think in an underground train—what a calendar is here, if we knew it!"

"There were saints made in the war," Peter said, "and out of the moſt unlikely material. The 'Greater Love' suddenly got its chance, and took it, and a man passed into the Presence of God a true saint, though he might be a great sinner."

"Then to be like St. Louis," Adoreé said, "is to be brave, a leader, and holy. Mr. Archer, you've been a soldier and a captain of men; now you muſt fall in love with something awfully good, and then you will be holy too! I'm almoſt sorry," she added, "that I made that promise about Miss Swithun. She is so good and inspiring."

"I have already made it quite clear," Peter said, "that I will not acknowledge that lady in any capacity but 'English' at school. I have desired with all becoming modeſty that I may hear no more of her. When I fall in love it will be with someone very young, simple and innocent, who yet has an extraordinarily good mind of her own and a vivid intereſt in all sorts of things. She will be *adorably* pretty,

too, and I shall *adore* her. It will be a case," Peter added, spelling the word interiorly, "of *Adoree-tion* !"

"I don't know where you are to find that girl nowadays," Adorée said, shaking her head wisely. "Girls nowadays are not simple and innocent. . . . (You should hear Aunt Isabel on the subject!) Almost all of them know an awful lot. I am perfectly astounded, sometimes, at the amount I know myself."

"I haven't a doubt of it. I shall find the girl I want all right: the thing is, will she have me when she knows ?"

"I should think she would. You are rather nice, you know."

"Thank you. So are you, if one may say so. Hallo! . . . The Gardien wants us to go on top of the tower. You coming, sir ?"

"Surely, surely. But what exceedingly narrow stairways they had in the Middle Ages, compared with the size of the rooms!"

They emerged into the ceaseless gale of Mistral which blows around the old walls and towers of Aigues Mortes.

"Why, how funny!" Adorée exclaimed. "We are in a kind of cage!"

"And just as well!" Peter said: "for other-

wise my hat would probably be sighted off the coast of Algeria to-morrow morning! No, you just don't, my friend!" he added to his hat, which was even then attempting to spread the wings of a dove.

"What a view!" Adorée sang. "What, what, what a view! It's like a gigantic wheel—isn't it, Daddy?—and we are the identical hub and geometrical centre. I feel as if millions and millions of straight lines were meeting in my brain. Look at the road we came along in the car—like lengths and lengths of white ribbon! . . . And there is the old gateway we passed under! Oh, and isn't the town a little dream from here?—perfectly girdled by the walls. And aren't Provençal tiles a lovely colour? What are they like, Daddy?"

"The colour has been compared to autumn leaves, my dear."

"Old, old leaves, then: November leaves which have fallen and worn thin like paper."

"And those towers over there, far away over towards the white light of the sea," Peter said, "must be Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer—where we are going when we leave here."

"'The Holy Maries of the Sea!' What

an adorable name! Who were they? What is it?"

"I don't exactly know who *they* were," Peter said, "but *it* is a miraculous church on the coast here. It is very old and very lovely, I believe; and they have pilgrimages to it from all over Provence. It must be a famous landmark from the sea."

"It sounds perfectly fascinating! But come on," Adorée said, "I shall simply have to go down. I can't keep my skirt in order. . . . It thinks it's a flag and wants to fly out. I wish skirts and hats didn't get such silly ideas in a wind."

"Weak-minded things, aren't they?" Peter agreed, as they descended the winding turret. "I had a hat once which thought it was a rook and went to live in a high tree. I got it back after a gale the following spring, and lo and behold there genuinely was a bird's nest in it!"

"How sweet! Were there eggs in it?"

"There were traces of egg."

By this time the party had emerged from the tower and was making a tour of the ramparts.

"It is here that the ghostly sentinels stand at night," Adorée said, "straining their eyes

along the moonpaths for the sails of St. Louis. What a pity he cannot come again, and dear faithful little Aigues Mortes have its triumph! This town wants the Lilies of Old France flying over it: the Tricolour looks all wrong. Aigues Mortes will never be Republican."

"Or Imperial," the Professor agreed. "What has Aigues Mortes got to do with parvenu eagles or doctrinaire bunting?"

"And do you notice," Peter said, "that there are no advertisements anywhere? I am horribly afraid that if this town were in England, they would have got somebody's pills and somebody else's motor-spirit on it."

"It would be for a sort of soap," Adorée said with conviction: "you see, St. Louis was pure and good, and that would give the soap-boilers a brain-wave. It would be called 'Saint's Scented.' There would be huge posters all over these walls. . . . 'Try Saint's Scented'—'Be Beatified in Bath'—'Look like Louis' Lilies!' Wouldn't there be, Daddy?"

"That is certainly our contemporary reaction to the Beauty of Holiness, my dear," the Professor agreed.

"Isn't it awful, sir," Peter said, "the way

these angel-faced children pick up the tricks of the street?"

"Angel-faced child yourself!" Adorée retorted. "I think 'Saint's Scented' is an awfully bright idea. I shall send it up somewhere when I get home. 'Dwell in Odour of Sanctity by Laving Limbs with Saint's Scented. . . .'"

"But what an incongruous place in which to discuss advertising," the Professor said, "here on the valiant walls of this inviolate town! I can imagine no place in all the world which would seem to me less likely to inspire such a topic."

"Oh, I don't know, Daddy. It's like feeling ribald in church—which I often do: whereas when I go to a revue, I feel rather solemn. It's nature compensating itself and restoring a balance."

"At that rate," Peter said, "what a cheerful person you would be to take to a dance or a wedding."

"Try me!"

"At which? A dance or a wedding?"

"A dance, I should think. You can't *try* people at weddings: if you tried me there, you would have to stick to me. Try me at a dance

someday; I should think you dance like an angel."

"'Is there no method to tell her in Spanish?'" Peter murmured, much wrought.

"What did you say?" Adorée demanded.

"I said I couldn't imagine an angel fox-trotting."

6.

"What is the idea in that dance, Miss Lore?" Peter asked.

He was sitting on the sea-wall at Les-Saintes-Maries, with wistful eyes on Adorée, who in the highest spirits was prancing about barefoot on the Mediterranean shore with her face towards the sea.

"It's a Pagan rite," Adorée explained between figures. "And I think it means:

'O pray make no mistake,
We're very wide awake,
The sea and I!'"

"'When you do dance,'" Peter quoted, "'I wish you a wave of the sea, that you might ever do nothing but that.'"

"Who said that?" demanded the dancer, desisting for a moment.

"Florizel said it to Perdita, in *A Winter's Tale*."

"So he did. Do you think I dance nicely?"

"Very nicely, Mademoiselle. You remind me of the lady in the poem:

> 'She dwells in forests; and cool springs beside
> She stirs light-footed; and she flits along
> The sea's fresh margin when the clear sky is
> Mirrored at evening on the smooth wet sands.'"

"Who was She, anyhow?"

"She was a poetic figure of solitude and the 'fancy free,' if I remember."

"How hard! I think I like her best just as a person. She sounds young in the poem. Is there any more about her?"

"She is always very, very young, and—yes, —there is one more verse. It goes like this:

> 'Twilight her frock is, and the stars her crown;
> Her voice is silence; and the breezes low
> Are her cool fingers; and her kisses are
> Moments of bliss that come and come unbidden.'"

"She sounds rather shadowy," Adorée said, critically.

"She is, rather," Peter agreed. "In fact, she is impossible until—until she happens."

"You're making her harder and harder. If 'her voice is silence,' she ought to be Aunt Isabel's niece! That's the sort of voice Aunt Isabel approves of in young girls."

"The idea of her," Peter said, "is rather like Aunt Isabel's niece, when Aunt Isabel's niece dances on the sea-shore."

"I don't think Aunt Isabel's niece ever does! Daddy's daughter does. How different we seem in different relationships, don't we? Daddy's daughter and Aunt Isabel's niece are two quite different people."

"What is Aunt Isabel's niece like?"

"Very demure and lady-like, with a polite little smile. She goes out calling with Aunt Isabel and sits on the very edge of her chair. . . ."

"With a cup of tea and a piece of cake?"

"That's the dear young thing! 'Professor Lore's daughter, don't you know. . . . No mother, poor child; but dear Mrs. Pringwell has done what she could' ('dear Mrs. Pringwell' is Aunt Isabel). 'She doesn't say much, but answers very prettily when spoken to. . . .' 'Oh yes, a delightful holiday! . . . Yes, in Provence—so interesting! . . . Yes, my father loved it, quite in his element—yes!' You can imagine it all, can't you?—buz-buz-buz, and the tinkle of teaspoons!"

"And what is 'Daddy's daughter' like?" Peter asked.

"Oh, she's a spoilt little minx and ought to be smacked. She gets her own way in almost everything, and she dances about with bare feet when she oughtn't, and she talks an awful lot. What she needs, of course, is firm discipline, but she's only got Daddy to give it her, and—well, look at him!"

The Professor, a picture of undisciplinary benignity and contentment, was ambling towards them along the shore.

"Viewing yourself for a moment as Peter Archer's friend," Peter said, "how does that feel?"

"Very nice and comfortable, thanks. Doesn't pinch me anywhere. I can use both arms and legs. See, I'll show you!"

And Adorée resumed her dance, catching up the unsuspecting Professor into a final figure of great abandon and causing him to rotate once or twice.

She was chanting:

> "'Come unto these yellow sands
> And there take hands:
> Curtsy when ye have, and kissed—
> The wild waves wist. . . .'

What's 'wist,' Daddy?"

She came and threw herself down in utter repose beside her father and Peter, where they sat on the sea-wall.

"Now I know what the Other End of Nowhere is like," she said, gazing about on the deserted and soundless landscape: "it's like all this round here. The land lies like an early Christian martyr, prone before the lions of the sea, but the lions are rebuked and slink back—because of the Holy Maries! Daddy"—suddenly—"what would you say if I became a Roman Catholic?"

"I should not say anything, my dear. People who take that step can usually be trusted to talk for two. It is small thanks to my various convert friends that I have a nose left on my face."

"Are you thinking of it?" Peter inquired.

"Gracious, no! The Pope and I wouldn't hit it off together at all. He thinks women ought to wear long skirts, long sleeves, long hair, and long everything! I was only thinking how much nicer Catholic churches are than Aunt Isabel's kind."

"What is Aunt Isabel's persuasion? I shall write a life of Aunt Isabel soon," Peter added; "I'm learning so much about her."

"Oh, hers is quite ordinary, I think. . . . You go on Sundays and Feast Days, and you put half a crown in the plate. You look very precise and mortified, and you bow to Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones—but never to Mrs. Brown! Your pew has large hassocks in it, and the whole place is very neat and hygienic and smells of varnish. Now look at Les-Saintes-Maries here: outside it's like Noah's Ark just come to rest, and inside it's partly like a very old ship and partly like a cave very deep under the sea. It's tremendously human—like a queer, crotchety old character, very wise and good, but original and *terrible*—in French. One thinks of the Holy Maries as the *Old* Maries: not meek, insipid-looking ladies in white nighties and lilies, but funny sibylline old grannies with gruff voices—and perhaps pipes. The church is their house, and they live there as they like, among thousands of souvenirs, and useless old trifles which were presents, and quaint heirlooms from ever so many generations. They have hardly room to turn round, but they wouldn't part with a single thing. What I admire about Catholics is that they let the dear Old Maries do what they like, and don't try to tidy them up and

set them in order—hurting their feelings like a District Visitor, and spoiling a sort of harmony."

"It's very true, my dear," the Professor said; "too many of our English churches are dedicated to Queen Victoria and your Aunt Isabel—except those (I like them even less) which should proclaim the patronage of Saints Hermaphrodite and Amphibian."

"I like the idea of the 'Old Maries,'" Peter said. "And if you are right about its being they who have kept the sea off the land, can't you just imagine them doing it—crying 'Shoo!' and whisking a broom?"

"'Janet, donkeys!'" suggested the Professor, quoting from his favourite author.

"Rembrandt has pictures like inside that church," Peter said. "I liked the guttering candles and forests of discarded crutches."

"Did you see the sweet little babies' shoes hanging up?" Adorée said. "I'm glad the Old Maries did that miracle."

"When I was younger," Peter said, "I had no use for any but Italian painting, but I'm taking more and more to the Dutch and Flemish. Similarly I thought people like Shelley and Rossetti were *the* poets."

"Don't you think so now?"

"No, I like guts—even in poetry."

"How horrid—'guts in poetry'! I think poetry ought to be ethereal."

"Gas instead of guts, eh?"

"I think you are being deliberately disgusting. However, you'll be pleased to know that Miss Swithun agrees with you—only she calls it 'body.'"

"The more inclusive term, certainly," the Professor found.

"I should want more evidence," Peter said, "that she and I mean the same thing. I distrust these euphemisms."

"You and Miss Swithun were simply *made* for each other," Adorée declared. "She has a mind that thinks very like yours. She is one of the cleverest people I ever met in my life, and I simply love her."

"Far be it from me to deny Miss Swithun her points," Peter allowed generously, for he had derived considerable satisfaction from Adorée's last sequence of remarks; "but people who think exactly alike ought not to marry, you know."

"Well, you must produce somebody for her to marry, then. I expect you know heaps of

nice men. She is far too nice not to get married."

"Are you so keen on marriage for nice people? No feminist would admit the logic of your last statement."

"Feminists aren't very good at logic, are they? What I mean is, it's a waste if perfectly splendid women don't have children."

"Quite so. Mr. Bernard Shaw, I understand, would meet the case with 'experimental marriages'—marriages, that is, contracted for a short time."

"I dare say. And nice children he'd get! Fancy a mother saying to her little girl or boy, 'You're going to have a nice new experimental Daddy!'"

"You take the old-fashioned view of marriage, then?"

"I think it's nonsense to talk about 'fashions' in marriage—as if it were skirts! Marriage is an adventure, not an experiment: and decent people see adventures through."

"Look here!" Peter said. "Don't you get going for me! I agree with you absolutely. I think it matters enormously what terms we use of things, especially of vital things like marriage. Things, like people, are affected

by their names, and we ought to see to it that great and beautiful things have great and beautiful names. Or what is poetry? I wish all these horrible fellows who speak of sacred human relationships in terms of their own science might be made to propose in it, that's all!"

"What fun that would be!" Adorée said. "One could make a sort of parlour-game of it—making lawyers and doctors and journalists propose in their special jargon. Wouldn't it be absolutely horrible? Can't you see the girl's face?"

"I hope she would tell them to go home and gargle," Peter said. "Women don't want to marry a specialist, they want to marry a man."

"But isn't a specialist a man?"

"With difficulty!" Peter replied.

"You are awfully down on specialists. I know a rather nice one in Wimpole Street."

"It just shows," Peter went on, pursuing his own line of thought, "how hopeless all this specialised science is. No scientist could make love or give comfort in terms of his science. But a musician can do both with music, a poet with poetry, a painter with line and colour. It just shows. Nothing can be

true of God which doesn't satisfy man, and nothing ought to be true of man which doesn't satisfy woman."

"But making love isn't the only thing in life," Adorée said, in her turn a little frightened by Peter's vehemence.

"In the long run," Peter affirmed, "love is the test of everything."

"When I made love," the Professor put in at this point, "I certainly did not do it in lecture-form, nor did I touch upon history. Indeed, it seemed to me that there was no historical parallel for what I was then feeling. My wonder is that your dear mother, Adorée, understood what I was driving at; but she did somehow, and her reply, I remember, was very much to the point. Nor did we continue along scientific lines, for what science can there be of a revelation? The scientist may prate, but the mystic is silent; because there are no words for what he would say."

"And you were very happy, sir?" Peter asked.

"Very happy, my dear boy. . . . But very, very happy, as I think people always are, fundamentally, when they have love in their lives. We would so gladly have renewed our

' experiment ' for a further term of years, when it drew to a close."

" May I be as fortunate, sir!"

" And me, Daddy!" Adorée said. " I want to be as fortunate too."

" I have an idea," the Professor said, knocking out his pipe, " that you both will be."

CHAPTER X

"In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of May,
Beautiful she is, like a tall garden lily. . . ."

* * * * *

". . . were this wild thing wedded. . . . "

LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

"DO you know, Daddy," Adorée was saying, reflectively, "I think Peter Archer is quite exceptionally nice."

She was sitting up in bed in her room in the Hôtel des Platanes, whither the Professor, following a custom of very long standing, had gone to wish her good-night. Finding his daughter wide-awake and talkative, he seated himself on the bed.

"I am not at all surprised to hear you say so, my dear," the Professor said, "and I entirely agree with you."

"What makes me think so is this," Adorée said, hugging her slim knees; "I couldn't have imagined anybody I'd want as a third to just you and me on our holiday. And yet, though

he has been simply everywhere with us since we got to know him, I haven't minded a bit! He fits in, doesn't he ?"

"It is one of his gifts, my dear."

"Yes, but"—rather discontentedly—"do you think he would fit in just as well with anybody ? I don't think I care for the sort of young man who is 'always at home wherever he goes'—the sort people say 'such a *dear* fellow' of !"

"I don't think you need worry at all, my dear. Peter does not strike me as being of that type, which I too dislike. He would only show himself in a sympathetic atmosphere; and the fact that he *has* shown himself so openly and charmingly to us would certainly suggest to me that he finds our society in a special sense congenial."

"He is very *sensitive*, Daddy," Adorée said, picking imaginary threads off the Professor's old dinner-jacket.

"What makes you think that, my dear ?"

"Oh, lots of little things. A man wouldn't notice, I expect. His face reminds me of a child's often—a child that isn't sure if you're going to do what it wants or not. It was that that made me like him, to begin with; he seemed

so pathetically pleased if one was nice to him. I have an idea he isn't very happy sometimes. . . . Has he a trouble of any kind ?"

"Not more than he will survive, my dear. . . . Not more than very many have had. At least, so far as I am in his confidence."

"He has heaps of humour," Adorée continued thoughtfully, "and yet—did you notice, Daddy ?—he was *really quite upset* about Miss Swithun! He reminded me of the little boy whose younger sister told him that if she went on growing so fast she'd get older than him. The little boy finished up in floods of tears, poor little fellow! Why was he so funny about that, Daddy ?"

"My dear, we all have lapses: our sense of humour fails us incalculably sometimes. I myself, I hope, am not deficient in humour (or how could I have lived in my own company all these years!), and yet I have often found myself taking quite seriously what was meant for a joke. When I was going on my lecture-tour in Canada . . ."

"When you were away *such* a long time, Daddy! And I had only Aunt Isabel. And I was convinced your ship would bump into an iceberg!"

"Well, it's all over now, my darling. But as I was saying, when I was going, a friend who had been in Canada told me to be very careful of Red Indians! Now I knew perfectly well that Red Indians are practically extinct, and that the few remaining would be most unlikely to scalp an old professor,—yet for a moment I half thought the warning was in earnest and began to think of adding a revolver to my kit! Our minds run back to the nursery now and then; perhaps Peter's was there when you mentioned your friend to him, and he felt for a moment what a child must often feel, that he might be forced into doing what he did not want."

"How funny! I didn't know a man's mind ever ran back to the nursery."

"Men are strange, scared creatures, Adorée: liable in many not remote contingencies to shed all but the first five years of their life."

"Sweet! Is it really so? How interesting, Daddy!" She perpended for a minute. "Then men are not really the stronger sex?" she said; "for I don't think a woman's mind ever runs back."

"But they like to think they are, dear."

"Oh, I should let them think it. . . . One

does. Daddy "— suddenly — "should you mind frightfully if someday I were to get married ?"

"Won't it rather depend on what you offer me in the way of a son-in-law, dear ?"

"No, I don't mean that. I mean, do you hate the idea of things ever being different ? I do, often. You see, you and I have always been so *very* close together."

"All this is abstract, is it, dear ?"

"Absolutely—I *think*—Daddy. I'd tell you like a shot. But I expect I shall have to get married someday—though, of course, I've got to be asked first, and I'm not in any hurry. I wish I could have my mother's luck and get a sweet little old thing like you! . . . You're too sweet, Daddy! Was my mother very pretty when you married her, darling ? . . . and did you love her very much ?"

This was a story the Professor had had to tell very often, and he told it well, with the right fairy-tale conviction.

"She was the most beautiful girl," he said, "that I had ever seen. Nobody in those parts could understand her wanting to marry me, because I was a good many years older than she was, and not well off—only a poor lecturer

at a Northern university, and not, people thought, at all likely to better my position. I was always going to write a book, and never got it done."

"But you've written splendid books, Daddy. Look, I've got the last beside my bed now!"

"Have you, my darling? . . . That is very sweet of you. But, you see, I had not written any in those days, and people began to say it was mostly talk in my case."

"Asses! Pigs! Just like *people*! I hate *people*! But my mother didn't think so, did she?"

"No, indeed: she was always quite sure the book would come. And it did."

"She must have been fearfully proud."

"Fearfully proud, Adorée. The book and the baby (that was you) came at about the same time, and we thought there was nothing like either. I used to sleep with my book beside me, and she had you beside her."

"You perfect darlings!"

"And—well, she lived long enough to hear you call her 'mother,' and to see me get a very good appointment. That was something."

"Daddy," Adorée said, "I am never going to marry. I have just made up my mind. If

men come in battalions, I shall tell them to 'right-about-face, quick march!' "

"If they come in battalions, I certainly should, my dear. But they won't. Or while you are dispersing the massed formations in front, a single scout will get in at the back—and you will find yourself surrendering to him!"

"Well—he would have to be a *single* scout, I suppose," Adorée said. "But let's try to keep him out, Daddy. Couldn't you pretend to be a very truculent, fierce father? Oh, but no, darling little Daddy—not with that face!"

"What is the matter with my face?" the Professor inquired, changing his glasses in a hurry so as to see himself in the long glass.

"Nothing is the matter, sweetheart: it's a duck of a face. That's just what the young man will see! Even if you went to a fancy-dress dance as the devil . . ."

"A thing I shall never do!" the Professor said.

"No, but if you did, darling—from a sense of duty or something—you would only look like a sweet old angel in disguise! Your eyes are just hopelessly kind and reasonable.

Daddy "—breaking off suddenly—"am I nice?"

"How, exactly, do you mean, my dear?"

"I mean, could I sort of vamp anybody if I tried?"

"'Sort of vamp?'" the Professor repeated. "I am not quite sure if I know how one does 'vamp' anybody. . . . Is it one of these very recent dances?"

"Aren't you hopeless, darling! No, I mean could I make anybody fall in love with me if I tried? Am I that sort? Am I *nice*?"

"You are far too nice to be that sort," the Professor said, indignantly. "What would your Aunt Isabel say to such talk at this time of night?"

"But who am I like, Daddy? You know about all sorts of interesting historical ladies. Am I like any of them? I should so like to be like somebody interesting—somebody who had power over people and could make them do things. Could I make a Petrarch write sonnets, do you think?"

"It would be more of a feat to stop him, my dear! Nothing will persuade me that Laura was really necessary."

"Daddy, you are being wilfully unromantic!

And you won't tell me who in history I am like. Tell me at once."

"But, my dear child, I don't know who you are like in history. I expect you are like numbers of nice little girls in all ages."

"*Daddy!*"

Adorée flung herself back against the pillows and covered her head with the sheet.

"How *can* you say such an awful thing?" she moaned. "'Numbers of nice little girls!' Oh!"

"But, my dear child," reasoned the Professor, sorely puzzled and patting tentatively the part of his daughter nearest his hand, "what do you want to be like? I cannot in honesty say that you at all remind me of Boadicea. I am afraid I don't quite follow you."

"'Numbers of nice little girls!'" Adorée went on moaning, still under the sheet.

The Professor went on patting.

But then, suddenly, the sheet flew back from Adorée's face, enveloping the Professor instead, and Adorée sat bolt-upright.

"I know!" she exclaimed, triumphantly. "I know what I'll do! I'll ask Peter Archer to-morrow what I'm like! He'll be *sure* to think of somebody interesting!"

CHAPTER XI

"... Nets her in her blushes, and wounds her, and tames.
Sure of her haven, O like a dove alighting,
Arms up, she dropped: our souls were in our names.

* * * * *

"Faults she had once as she learnt to run and tumbled:
Faults of feature some see, beauty not complete.
Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes holy
Earth and air, may have faults from head to feet."

LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

I.

"THE charabanc seemed to be going to be rather full," Peter explained, a little shamefacedly, "so I just nipped round to the Garage Aubert and hired a car. It's ages since we had one."

The Professor shook an admonitory finger at the prodigal young man, but Adorée, whom no considerations of economy disturbed in the least, was frankly delighted.

"How lovely!" she said, taking the seat beside the driver (to the prospective driver's immense inward satisfaction) and spreading herself there. "What a nice car! And you

drive so well too, doesn't he, Daddy? Where are we supposed to be going this afternoon?"

The Professor, not without a certain wistful consciousness that he acted symbolically, took the back seat; and they started.

"We are going to Vaucluse," Peter answered Adorée. "And I really don't know," he went on, "what Petrarch would have said to us for not going sooner. It is the nearest excursion from Avignon, as well as one of the loveliest. We go towards the mountains: Vaucluse is right in under them—in a narrow valley of rocks and trees."

"Oh, I know," Adorée said; "it's where that old Petrarch lived, isn't it? I think that's why we've never been there. I was rather put off Petrarch by seeing his portrait."

"Oh, well," Peter reassured her, "he didn't leave his face about beside the fountain. And, after all, you know, he was a poet and could be trusted to know a good place when he saw one. He thought Vaucluse one of the choicest haunts in the world, and only regretted it wasn't in Italy."

"Why should it be? How like a poet! But he seems," Adorée added, "to have been a good many things besides a poet. I was

reading him up in a book of Daddy's last night, and it appears he settled at Vaucluse so as to be able to keep a watchful eye on the Pope. He wrote letters to the Pope telling him off like anything! If I'd been the Pope, I wouldn't have stood it."

"Yes, and Petrarch was not by any means the only mentor the poor old Pope had at the time," Peter said: "there was St. Catherine of Sienna writing to him by every post, so to speak,—and St. Brigid of Sweden having visions about how he ought to behave."

"Why couldn't they leave the poor man alone?" Adorée asked, indignantly. "What business was it of theirs, and what did they want him to do?"

"They thought the time ripe for the return of the Pope to Rome," the Professor told her. "The exile at Avignon had lasted for sixty years and more, and great importance was attached to his re-establishment in the Holy City. But the Pope was a Frenchman, and he greatly preferred the happy country we see smiling around us, to the tumults and pestilence of Rome."

"I'm sure I don't blame him," Adorée said. "Why *should* he go back to Rome, if he liked it better in Avignon?"

"Well, my dear, he was Bishop of Rome; and then a special significance naturally attaches to the Holy City. There were political reasons too, and altogether Petrarch and the two saints had a strong case."

"You bet they had!" Adorée said, with feeling. "People like that always have. Aunt Isabel always has a quite unanswerable case when it's something I don't want to do. Incidentally, why is Petrarch plain *Mister* Petrarch, seeing what an interest he took in the Pope? Why isn't he Saint Petrarch? But if I had been the Pope, I should have done as I liked. . . . Isn't he infallible? So if he said it was right to stay in Provence, it was right. I don't see what is the use of being infallible if a lot of mixed saints and poets are going to force one to remove against one's will. Do you remember, Daddy, when Aunt Isabel tried to stampede you and me into moving? We weren't infallible, but we didn't budge!"

"The Pope had a traitor in his own breast, my dear. More admonitory even than Petrarch, more urgent than Catherine, more inspired than Brigid of Sweden, was his own conscience; and it was this that in the end overcame his reluctance."

"He did go, then?"

"Yes, he went back to Rome—for which great honour is due to him. But he returned again to Avignon. . . ."

"What did old Petrarch say to that? Or had he moved too?"

"Petrarch did not say anything, my dear. The Pope was tired out, and he only returned to die where he was at home. His successor returned finally to Rome; and after *his* death came the Great Schism."

"A conscience is a great nuisance," Adorée said; "but I suppose one has to have one. It is far more comfortable to be like Petrarch and Aunt Isabel and have one for other people. The scissors meant two Popes, didn't it?"

"The Schism did, my dear."

"And later," Peter told her, "there were three for a while."

"Three Popes!" Adorée exclaimed. "How *sweet*! I suppose they never sat all three in a row, but they would have looked perfect pets if they had! But how frightfully muddling! What did people do who wanted a bell, a book, or a candle?"

"They applied to the Pope they believed in."

"If I'd been they," Adorée said, "I would have got a bell from Pope One, a book from Pope Two, and a candle from Pope Three! Then I would have been quite safe. Were they all infallible? But do look," she broke off, "the mountains are coming quite close! Aren't they blue—blue—blue? This grey rock soaks in the sky. . . . I love it!"

Peter accelerated, and the mountains flew towards them.

"It is getting lovelier and lovelier," Adorée cried, standing up in the car. "*What* green country! What *blue* rock! And what is this wonderful peacock-coloured water running beside the road?"

"It is the Sorgue," Peter told her; "it comes from the Fountain of Vaucluse."

"What? All this great volume of water? Never! I thought fountains were just jets."

"They are in English gardens," the Professor said; "but not when they gush up naturally from under the Alps. And what you see here is a mere nothing to the terrific volume and impact of the same stream nearer its source in the Vale of Vaucluse."

"Does the water spout out of the earth, like when Moses lost his temper?"

"Not spout exactly," Peter said: "it rises imperceptibly into a deep pool under a huge overhanging cliff. At first there seems to be no motion at all, and if you throw a light twig on to the water it sort of hesitates and doesn't know where to go. It hardly stirs. Yet not fifty feet away a terrific cataract is pouring and foaming, and filling the whole valley with its roar. You have to shout to be heard—and even then you aren't."

"It sounds glorious. But how hard for Petrarch to make love to Laura in a noise like that! I know a man who was just on the point of proposing to a girl, but that very minute a motor-cycle went by the window and a barrel-organ began in the street. He had actually said something, but she didn't hear him, and just thought he wanted another lump of sugar in his tea. So he thought better of it, and didn't after all! Perhaps that is what happened to Petrarch; he was always proposing to Laura, but she never quite 'got' him, so he took it out in sonnets."

"You have there ample material for a thesis, my dear," the Professor observed; "that is such stuff as B.Litts. are made of."

"'And our little life is rounded by a

sleep!' " Peter added. But he went on immediately to say: " I mean, as to the average thesis! That one, if you developed it, would be great fun."

" Miss Swithun has a B.Litt.," Adorée remarked, watching Peter closely out of the tail of her eye.

Which Peter must have noticed, for he suddenly accelerated and took the car round a sharp bend at a pace which threw Adorée up against him and all but caused the Professor to signal to following vehicles with his leg.

" I loathe these labels!" Peter said, when the equilibrium was restored. " Attached to women, they are specially odious. Fancy sticking B.A. on to a decent name! . . . Bah!"

" I expect if we say anything you'll tip us into the Sorgue," Adorée said. " What a nasty temper you've got! I don't think I shall drive with you any more."

Peter, glancing sideways from his wheel, saw that she was really angry, and he was sorry. But a demon entered into him, and he replied:

" You are not bound to, of course."

" Thank you, I know that. If I thought I

were I should be sorry. Daddy," Adorée said, "I think I will come into your part of the car; I don't choose to be thrown up against a lot of gears and things every time Mr. Archer forgets he is not the only person in it."

"Shall I stop for you to make the change?" Peter inquired.

"Please. Thank you."

The change was duly made, and the car got under way again.

"Here," said the Professor, "is even more matter for a thesis! Much history has sprung from causes as trivial. I cannot think, Adorée, that Peter meant to inconvenience us; and I am sure, if he did so inadvertently, he is sorry."

"I should almost have thought, sir, Miss Lore might know that."

"I do not know it. You did it on purpose. . . . I saw you! And you were abominably rude about Miss Swithun."

"Should you like to turn back to Avignon, Miss Lore?"

"Please settle it with Daddy. . . . I don't care a bit one way or the other. But whether we go forwards or backwards, I should be glad to do it at a reasonable pace."

"Could you indicate the speed at which you would choose to travel?"

"The speed a gentleman usually takes his passengers at!"

"I am not sure if I know that speed."

"No, I shouldn't think you did!"

"Peter," said the Professor, "if I am not mistaken, here is a hay-waggon approaching, which will require your attention at the wheel. There, there, my dear child"—to Adorée—"come, now, don't be silly!"

The journey proceeded.

2.

The car, after a most meticulous process of drawing up, came to an imperceptible and soundless standstill under the glancing plane-leaves of the village of Vaucluse. If an invalid had been aboard, sleeping the hinge-sleep between life and death, the driver could not have improved on his performance.

"Well," said the Professor, breaking the utter silence which ensued upon the engine's, "here is beauty and gaiety indeed! I think," he went on to his lifeless companions, "that we have here the ideal setting for the 'Gay

Science' and romance. Vaucluse is surely the very epitome of lyric inspiration."

"The mountains are *too* close," Adorée said, "and they rise too steeply. I feel oppressed by them."

"And that paper-mill," Peter objected, "is a fearful blot on the landscape, in my opinion."

He glanced at Adorée as he spoke, but she did not glance back.

The Professor glanced at them both.

"We shall soon get beyond the mill," the Professor said, "as we walk towards the Fountain, and then that slight blemish upon all this loveliness will be lost. Meanwhile, we must not be captious. What could be more happily thought of, in this haunt of literature, than a paper-mill? I am sorry the mountains oppress you, Adorée: have you a headache, that you screw up your face so?"

"I *don't* screw up my face! But—yes," Adorée said, "I have got a headache; I was so thrown about in the car."

"It is a pity," Peter remarked, "that we did not come, after all, in the charabanc. The roads would, of course, have been quite different then, and nobody need have been thrown about."

"Much more important than our mode of coming," said the Professor, "is the fact that we are here. Shall we proceed along the gorge to the Fountain?"

"There is nothing much else to do here, is there?" Adorée said.

"We could sit for a while at one of these delightful cafés under the trees, if you would like a short rest. Perhaps," the Professor suggested, "a cup of tea would do your head good, my dear?"

"A cup of French tea wouldn't—and it's always particularly nasty at these out-of-the-way places. No, we came to see the Fountain, so we had better go there and get it over. I expect it is miles and miles away, but come on."

"If you are feeling not quite well, Miss Lore," Peter said, in whose heart contrition now powerfully wrought—especially as he noticed that Adorée was looking suddenly very pale, "how would it be for me to take the car further along the gorge? The road is quite passably good, and I would drive very carefully."

"Thanks: but I've had quite enough of the car. Are you coming, Daddy?"

"What rich, what radiant sunshine!" the Professor observed, as they took their way now along the gorge. "I am reminded of a hymn which I was obliged to learn in my infancy: 'Let the blessed sunshine in; Let the naughty temper out!' Exceedingly odd," he went on, "how these old tags recur to the mind now and then, for no apparent reason! Observe how the beams glance among the foliage and glitter on the broken water! I never remember to have seen water of such a pure blue before."

"It is almost *too* blue," Adorée said. "And the sun is very dazzling and hot. And what horrible swarms of flies! Let's go and sit down beside the water: here is a way down."

"It is rather slippery," Peter said, testing the way; "may I offer you a hand?"

"Please do not. I am quite capable of taking a few steps."

With considerable ado, and more than one false step on the Professor's part, all three reached the vociferous margin.

"What a noise the water makes!" Adorée said. "I wish it wouldn't. I don't wonder Laura loathed Vaucluse."

"Did she, my dear?" said the Professor, to whom this was news.

"Daddy, you know you've told me she did! Anyhow, she would—anybody would! Oh, it's deafening. . . . I'm going up."

"But you wished to come down, my dear!"

"Well, I wish to go up. One may change one's mind, I suppose? I thought it would be nice down here, but it's not—it's horrid!"

"Are you quite well, my child? You are looking very pale."

"Oh, don't fuss, Daddy—please. And do *not* stare at me in that pained way, Mr. Archer! *No*, I can get up the same as I got down. . . . Why should men always assume that women are such fools on their feet?"

With considerable ado, and more than one collapse on the Professor's part, all three regained the path.

"The gorge gets lovelier and lovelier," said the Professor, as they proceeded along it. "And what a magnificent perpendicular of sheer rock that is before us!"

"Do you mean that horrible great dead-end which looks as if it were going to fall on us?"

"I daresay we mean the same thing, my dear."

"Oh!" Adorée said, suddenly sitting down beside the way, "I *can't* go any further. I

don't want to see the Fountain. I wish you two would go on without me."

"We are almost there," Peter said. "I do wish you would take my arm, Miss Lore."

"Well, I won't."

"Just a few steps more, my dear," the Professor said, putting his arm around his daughter. "There, that's the way! Come along. Notice how the sound of the water begins to die away! . . . Now it has almost ceased! We are at the Fountain."

The uncanny hush of the Fountain of Vaucluse fell around them.

"Where *is* the Fountain?" Adorée said.

"That is it, my dear: that deep, still pool under the great cliff. Thousands of tons of living water are soundlessly and invisibly rising into that profound grotto out of the depths of the earth."

"It isn't *my* idea of a fountain! It's an anticlimax! Oh, dear," Adorée moaned, "we've come all this long way up that steep stony path, and I am so tired,—to see just nothing at all!"

"Let us sit down and watch the shadows on the water," the Professor suggested. "It will cool us after our climb."

"Do let your father persuade you, Miss Lore. See," Peter said, industriously clearing away a litter of twigs and small stones from a scoop in the rock, "here is quite a natural armchair! Do sit here, Miss Lore. . . . You are not looking yourself at all."

"Not looking myself! . . . What *do* you mean? Daddy, I don't want to look at the water: I want to go back to Avignon."

"But, my child, you are so tired . . . and it is a long walk back to the car! How is your headache?"

"Shall I fan you a little?" Peter panted, wrestling with a sappy young bough.

"I think," the Professor said, fumbling in his waistcoat pocket, "that I have an aspirin somewhere about."

"Oh," Adorée stormed, bursting into tears, "I do wish you two wouldn't fuss! I don't *want* an aspirin, Daddy—and I *won't* be fanned! I want to be alone. Let me go on by myself back, and you two follow afterwards."

And without more words she made off down the path.

The Professor sighed resignedly and looked at Peter, who exchanged the glance for one of agonised interrogation.

"Best let her be," the Professor said.

"Is she still angry with me, sir?" Peter asked in anguish. "Am I the cause of all this? Oh, I could kick myself!"

"She has not been quite herself all day. No, my dear boy, your little fracas was a symptom, not a cause. You noticed how pale she had turned?"

"She is as white as a sheet, sir. Do let us follow her at once."

"We should only aggravate her. Much better let her be for a time."

"But suppose she should fall—faint—be taken acutely ill? My God, sir, I must go after her."

"You will be very ill-advised—very ill-advised. Unless I much mistake the symptoms, she will be sick very soon."

"Sick, sir? Good God, what can be the matter? Is there a doctor in Vaucluse, do you think?"

"There is usually a doctor inside us," the Professor remarked, seating himself in the despised natural armchair and producing his pipe and tobacco, "when our malady is a slight biliousness. It has been very hot to-day, and I rashly persuaded the poor child to try *Châ-*

teauneuf rouge at lunch. She quite took to it, but I gravely fear it has not taken to her."

"But what are we to do?" Peter cried, much wrought and almost hating the placid Professor, who was now puffing at his pipe with every sign of pleasure. "Could I not climb back above the path and fetch a doctor from Vaucluse?"

"You will do much better," the Professor said, "to sit quietly down here beside me and put on a pipe. What exquisite water this is, to be sure!"

"How you can smoke, sir . . . ! She may be suffering all alone by the wayside! Oh, it is too horrible! . . . I must go to her."

"My dear Peter," the Professor argued, "one would think you had never heard of an ordinary slight biliousness. It is not at all a serious complaint, and she will very soon be better; but no bilious person wishes to be overlooked in the crisis even by the eye of affection and solicitude. I do wish I could persuade you to light your pipe and join with me in enjoying this charming scene."

But Peter was unpersuadable; he strode about in the most fearful agitation of spirit.

"Oh, I shall go crazy!" he burst out at

length. "I cannot bear it! *You* go after her, sir. . . . You are her father. If, as you think, it is a touch of—I can quite understand she might prefer me to stay behind. But I will be within call. For God's sake, sir—Professor Lore, *you* go! She may have fainted!"

"Calm yourself, calm yourself, Peter, my dear fellow," the Professor said soothingly. He had kept on glancing from time to time through an aperture in the trees and bushes beside him: which *may* have commanded a view of further down the path!

He did this now, looked back at Peter with a gratified expression, and relit his pipe.

"Calm yourself—now do," he urged the almost frantic young man.

After some further lapse of time, passed by the Professor in the placid contemplation of nature and by Peter in the most fearful anguish of spirit, the former rose up from his seat in the rock and carefully dusted his trousers: a process which almost drove Peter from what remained of his senses.

"Now, my dear boy," the Professor said, "I think—if you have sufficiently admired this marvellous fountain—we may perhaps

pursue our poor little termagant without fear of anticipating our welcome."

He passed his arm through Peter's as he spoke, thus compelling the young man to dawdle down the path at a pace which accorded ill with the tumult of his emotions.

A minute's walk brought them to where, prone beside the way, Adorée lay much exhausted, looking like a small white rag. She greeted her father with a flickering smile of gratitude and commendation.

"What a *mercy* you didn't come any sooner!" Adorée said, in a weak voice which wrung Peter's vitals. "I don't think red wine agrees with me, Daddy: I've not been very well."

"Darling! Angel! Pet! Beloved! Poor little suffering bird!" Peter cried among the echoes of his heart of hearts. Aloud he said:

"Are you feeling better, Miss Lore?"

"Ever so much, thanks. . . . But I feel a bit weak and swimmy still. I don't think I can possibly walk yet, but, oh, I am so sick of these horrid trees and the noise of that horrible fountain! What am I to do, Daddy?"

"Well, my dear . . ." the Professor was beginning, rather dubiously.

Peter cut him short.

"Miss Lore," he said, in a voice of supplication, "if you can ever forget my detestable and—and unforgivable rudeness and—brutality in the car this afternoon, *will* you do me the—greatest honour, and give me the—greatest pleasure I have ever had in all my worthless life, and let me *carry* you back to the car? We can get some brandy at a café there, and some tea, when you feel you would like some; and then we can get back to Avignon for you to lie down comfortably. I give you my sacred word of honour that I'll drive like an angel and—and a lamb! Oh, do let me! I can't bear to see you lying there by the roadside so limp and forlorn, and miles and miles away from all comfort. . . . It's simply tearing my heart in pieces. If you only knew! You're as light as swan's-down and—and snow-flakes . . . and of course your father would carry you, only you might be too heavy for him all that distance! And you're as light as—rose-petals and—sea-foam, and I shouldn't know I had you in my . . . or rather, I should, but . . . *Oh, do please let me!*"

"Shall Peter and I make a chair for you, my dear?" the Professor suggested.

"You would get lumbago, Daddy."

"Professor," Peter urged, "don't—don't run any needless risks! Your daughter may need you! No, do let me be the one to carry her."

"My dear boy, if we wait a very few minutes more, she will be able to walk herself."

"That's what I'm afraid of! . . . No, I mean, *how* much better to get back to the car at once! Think—*think* of all the brandy there is in the village! Miss Lore, may I?"

"Sure I won't be too heavy?"

"Heavy!" Peter could have said a great deal more, but his feelings choked him.

"She is looking much better already," the Professor said. "Her colour is coming back, and she is smiling quite naturally. Try standing up, my dear."

"I—I'd much rather be—carried," Adorée said, collapsing pathetically.

"By heaven, you *shall* be!" Peter cried, in a great state of valiancy, his tone implying "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!" "Do I hurt you at all? Do you feel the slightest pain?"

"Oh, I didn't have any *pain*," Adorée admitted. "It was only that I felt, and *was*, so . . ." She saved herself, just in time,

from being altogether too confiding. "No, you're doing it beautifully," she said.

"Tell me if I jolt you *in the slightest*," Peter implored, gliding along the path with a rapt expression. "Would you at all care to rest your head on my shoulder (You *perfect* angel!)? Shall your father carry your shoes (I never saw juch *adorable* little feet!)? If you feel sleepy, sust go to sleep (You heavenly baby!). If you want any earthly thing either done or undone, you've only got to mention it. Are you *sure* you're comfortable?"

"So comfortable!" Adorée murmured, relaxing utterly where she lay. "So awfully comfortable!"

CHAPTER XII

"Happy, happy time, when the white star hovers. . . ."
LOVE IN THE VALLEY.

I.

"YES, thanks awfully, I am absolutely all right again. I ate my dinner without a qualm. But I didn't have any red wine! Daddy drank it all."

To Peter posted on the pavement under the twilight planes thus spoke Adorée, fluttering out in a white frock from the ivy-dusk and pale oleander flowers of the hotel garden.

"Do you mind," the vision went on, "if it's only me? We called for our letters just before dinner, and Daddy got a fat one all about a syllabus. So now he is answering it up in my bedroom. He will be out presently."

"No, I don't mind if it's only you," Peter said, finding a husky voice with an effort. "Shall we sit here under the trees?" he suggested. "And do you feel equal to a liqueur?"

"Not to a liqueur, I think—sticky things! But to coffee, yes. . . . And I'll have a cigarette, please."

"Do you mind giving me that one back?"

"But I've licked it! Why?

"It's—got a damaged end."

"Story! It hasn't."

"Do let me have it, though. You can have all the rest in the case."

"Is it a magic cigarette?"

"Yes."

"Then I shall keep it!"

"The magic only works for me. To you it would be just like any other."

"Oh. . . . Well, then! But aren't you going to smoke it?"

"No, I am going to keep it."

Adorée gazed around happily at the gay street.

"Isn't Avignon looking a dream to-night?" she said. "I get fonder and fonder of this darling town. Couldn't you sit here just like this for ever?"

"Provided it was *just* like this, for ever and for ever."

"You seem a bit dreamy yourself this evening," Adorée said, glancing at Peter through her long lashes. "What is the matter? Is it that old pump again—the one you had stolen in Paris? Or are you still a teeny-

weeny bit cross with me for being such a pig this afternoon ?"

" Certainly not that," Peter said. " Please don't remind me that I behaved like an absolute brute."

" You didn't. It was my fault. You see, I felt rather—like what happened."

" You are quite better now ? You're sure ?"

" Absolutely ! It was nothing really. I do get like that sometimes. . . . Isn't it unromantic ?"

" Nothing about you *could* be unromantic. You simply *are* romance."

" Oh," Adorée cried, " do tell me ! Do you think I am like interesting people in history ?"

" A certain number of more or less interesting people made a sort of bungling attempt to be like you."

" Now you are being silly, aren't you ? Think of all the wonderful people there have been in history !"

" I'm sorry," Peter said, " but I can't. Not to-night, here on the pavement—with you in a white frock, under the stars of Avignon ! I can only wonder how all the poor old buffers in history managed to drag along."

" Do you like my dress ?"

"Do you like snowdrops?"

"I love them."

"Well, so do I love your dress."

"It is rather pretty, I think," Adorée said, looking at her slim knees which the soft whiteness just covered. "I chose it in Paris."

"No, it chose you. It would! If there is a pretty frock in a window, *how* it must want to come to you! If pretty frocks could choose, you'd have all Paris and London for ever unpacking themselves at your feet."

"*Gracious!* how lovely that would be! You have such a nice fairy-tale sort of mind. What should I do with all the frocks in your story?"

"You would give them away to people who need such things to make them look pretty. You would just put on the oldest and plainest you had, and all the sumptuous creations would fade out wishing to goodness they could look like that."

"Poor dears! I think that would be rather affected of me. It sounds like Joseph's dream. . . . I always rather sympathised with the elder brothers."

"It is the way things happen in fairy-tales," Peter said. "If the fairies *will* come to people's christenings, who is to blame?"

"But there was usually a snag when the fairies came," Adorée reminded him. "Some very sententious fairy (like Aunt Isabel) didn't get her invitation-card, so she came without, and mixed up a bad gift with all the good ones."

"Nothing of the sort occurred in this case. I've looked up all the records. All the 'Beſt' fairies were there, and each ate a very large ſlice of cake and was in the beſt of tempers. It was in the *Fairy Times* and the *Rainbow Gazette* : 'A large and influential gathering of fairies yeſterday attended the chriſtening of the Princess Adorée, and all conferred priceleſs gifts on the sleeping babe. Old Fairy Crabſtick (who, we are glad to learn, has recently engaged a competent secretary-bird), duly received her card of invitation and attended in high good humour. The proceedings passed off without a single one of those regrettable hitches which at one time threatened to give us fairies a bad name.'"

"How real it sounds!" Adorée cried, clapping her hands. "How clever you are! But I am afraid," she added, "that the reporter was wrong about Fairy Crabſtick. Juſt as she was going she felt her ſtays a bit tight, or else she

had eaten too much cake,—anyhow, she leant over the cradle and whispered, 'And she shall always be sick when she is naughty!' "

"I shall never speak to old Crabstick again," Peter declared indignantly; "she is simply not to be trusted at christenings. But, do you know, I don't think her gift was such a very bad one, after all: at least it promptly atones for one's naughtiness. Now, if I had been as sick as I deserved to be this afternoon, a Channel crossing wouldn't have been in it!"

"And I am sure you don't think *really*," Adorée said, "that women ought not to have degrees and things?"

"All women ought to have 'and things,'" Peter said; "and things and things—and then things! As for degrees, I think *all* women ought to have them, whether they go to college or not."

"Oh yes, I dare say. But what I want to know is what you *really* think."

"Honestly," Peter said, "I honestly think women ought to have degrees if they want them. But I don't think 'Bachelor' applies very well, do you?"

"No, I don't," Adorée agreed. "And 'Spinster of Arts' would be even worse.

Can you think of a good degree for a woman ?"

" Heaps—and decorations too! All married women are ' Privy Councillors,' aren't they ?—and vaſt numbers of them, I know for a faſt, ought to have the ' Order of Merit.' These things are juſt commonplaces with women; it is only men who make a great song about them."

" But what would you say," Adorée persiſted, " if I, for inſtance, got an ordinary B.Litt ?"

" I should say the examiners were rotters. You couldn't get an ' ordinary B.Litt.' "

" Be careful, Mr. Peter Archer !"

" I am being — much more than you. I am picking my terms nicely and exaſtly! Nothing that you did could possibly be *ordinary*, and therefore you couldn't get an *ordinary* B.Litt. Don't be so greedy: leave the ordinary things for ordinary people. But personally," Peter went on, " I always think a ' Bachelor of Literature ' sounds such a poor sort of thing—as though a man had wanted to marry Literature, but she turned him down, so he juſt had to become one of her many bachelors. It is a very sad ſtory, I think."

" Daddy is a D.Litt.," Adorée said.

"Ah, that is quite a different thing! He has the upper hand. In point of fact, all people who have the gift of writing interestingly and well *are* D.Litts., whether a university chooses to call them so or not: or else there is no such thing. But preserve me from being a bald-headed, bitter, bad-tempered old bachelor—of Literature or anything else!"

"But you are a bachelor, aren't you?" Adorée said.

"No, I absolutely decline the term. No man ought to be called that horrid name just because he isn't married yet. A bachelor is a man who either can't or won't get married. A young man who isn't married yet is simply a young unmarried man."

"It sounds good enough sense," Adorée admitted.

"It *isn't* good enough, in any sense! I, for instance, am sick to death of it."

"I should think," Adorée said, "you would soon get married."

"What makes you think that?"

"Oh—you strike me as a person who, if he is sick to death of a thing, will pretty soon change it. Do you know," she went on, shivering slightly, though the air was very

warm, "I am a tiny bit chilly. Will you be an angel and get me a wrap?"

"I will get you any mortal thing on earth," Peter said, with a relapse into huskiness. "Where shall I find one?"

"You won't at all, now I come to think of it. They are all upstairs. I shall have to go myself."

"No, you just don't, Miss Adorée Agatha Lore," Peter said, jumping up: "not until you faithfully promise to come back again!"

"How did you know my second name was Agatha?" Adorée asked, in great admiration.

"I know Greek, you see—or did! At least, I know enough of it to know that!"

"Aren't you clever!"

"I am, rather: I used to be whipped for it at school. Now," Peter said, "about that wrap. I ask you, is it likely I'll let you go in and very likely not come out again? How would it be if we chucked a small stone up at the window where your father is and got him to throw something down?"

"Oh yes. . . . Let's! That's his window. . . . No, you throw."

"That got it!"

"Good! Daddy, Daddy!"

"Professor! Professor Lore!" Peter's shout (he was feeling lusty) stirred the plane-leaves and drew the eyes of all the street.

The Professor poked a mild face through the window.

"What is it?" he inquired. "What is the matter? Do you want me?"

"No . . . oh, no, sir!"—Peter's tone was almost too reassuring. "You just carry on with your letters: we are being perfectly good. It's only that 'She Who must be Obeyed' is rather chilly: we wanted you to throw down a wrap."

"Chilly now, is she? She is always something: first cross, then sick, now chilly! Little monkey! Ask her which of all her numerous and bewildering garments she wants."

"She says, 'Any old wrap'!"

A diaphanous garment fluttered down from on high, which, though it appeared as light as gossamer, yet caused the recipient to collapse under it—with laughter.

"Isn't that Daddy too sweet? He has gone and thrown down my dressing-gown!"

"Is that your dressing-gown?" Peter inquired, eyeing the filmy garment with awe.

"And Daddy thought it was a wrap!"

"But isn't it?"

"For one's bedroom—yes. Hardly for here!"

"It looks to me," Peter said, making an excuse for handling it, "exactly like a very chic and fascinating evening-cloak. Put it on, please."

"Oh, well . . . Does that suit you?"

"It suits *you*!"

"Shall we walk?" Adorée suggested.

"Whatever you please. Where?"

"Oh, in and out and round about—among the people and the trees."

"Why among the people? But I am all for trees. Let's go down there."

'There' was a narrow alley, full of the deep-green dusk of plane-trees and the dark blue of the spangling sky.

"But," Adorée said, glancing down, "but it's all dark down there!"

"You'll have me with you."

"Yes, I—I know."

2.

"*Adorée?*"

"What, Peter?"

"Then I may call you—that?"

"I don't know why you didn't long ago. I never met such a correct person!"

"And you will call me 'Peter'? Say it, please. What a nice name it is! . . . I don't think I ever heard it properly before."

"But sometimes, you know," Adorée said, "I shall call you 'Petrarca'—as Daddy did, accidental-done-a-purpose, the first day we met."

"When you do that," Peter said, "I shall call you 'Laura.'"

"She was rather a fright. . . . But I shan't mind. What will you call Daddy?"

Peter stopped in the intense green dusk of the planes.

"Do you know," he said, in a low voice, very deliberately, "what I would give my head to be able to call your father?"

"What would you give your head to be able to call Daddy?"

"*Father-in-Laura!*"

"No——no: wait a minute! Peter," Adorée said, "is that just a joke, or are you—really and seriously—asking me—something?"

"I am really and seriously asking you *everything*, you absolutely adorable little sheer piece of sovereign perfection! Adorée,

Adorée," Peter cried, "you do like me just a little, don't you, Adorée? Please, *please* say you do, Adorée."

"Yes, I do like you, Peter."

"Thank you . . . oh, thank you for saying that, Adorée. But do you think," Peter hurried on, "oh, do you think you could ever possibly by any remote and miraculous chance come to—to *love* me a tiny bit too? Oh, don't answer at once if you are not sure," Peter begged: "my *whole life hinges* on what you say."

Adorée did not reply at once. An æon of twenty seconds may have passed before she spoke, and, when she spoke, her face was turned away from Peter, and so close to the trunk of the tree that it seemed she had taken counsel of it.

"I don't believe I could love you a little tiny bit, Peter," Adorée said, "but I do believe I could—love you a—*whole lot*! *Oh!* . . . *Peter!*"

The Provençal stars twinkled and winked.

"You utter, utter, utter angel!" Peter said. "Oh, Adorée!"

"I was frightened—rather, Peter," Adorée whispered.

"Don't be, little darling. I'll look after you always. There! . . . That didn't frighten you, did it? Oh," Peter cried, "I'm so happy I could speak poetry!"

"Speak some."

"*Adorée!*"

"Is that all?"

"All—and all—and all. . . . 'All I know on earth and all I need to know.'"

"What lovely things you say!" Adorée said. "I—I think I am beginning to like it, Peter. It—it rather took my breath away at first."

"Mine has gone for ever," Peter said; "I shall never get it again. But one doesn't need breath where I am! Adorée! . . . Oh, if you could see yourself—just as you look, in that adorable little white frock! . . ."

"I can see you."

"What lovely things *you* say, darling!"

"I could speak poetry too, Peter."

"Speak some, beloved."

"I'll whisper it right into your ear. . . . Like that, and—like that!"

"That is the very loveliest poetry I ever heard. Whisper some more."

"When I've made some more. Peter," Adorée said, "when did you begin about me?"

"You won't believe me if I tell you," Peter answered. "Well, I began on the platform at the Gare de Lyon!"

"But . . ."

"I said you wouldn't believe it, but it's true. I saw you, though you didn't see me; I was going to Grenoble, but as soon as I set eyes on you I followed you to Avignon. I was on the same train."

"Peter! You're not making it up, are you?"

"I couldn't, darling, darling—not clever enough! No, it happened. My wonder is that anybody went to Grenoble that evening at all."

"Did you really change your mind just because you liked the look of me?"

"I utterly ceased to have any other mind than the one that adored every atom of you!"

"Oh," Adorée exclaimed, "then it must have been your luggage that Daddy and I saw! There were lots of bags, marked 'Grenoble' as if they meant Grenoble,—and they were being piled on to the Avignon train. A hand came through the window and grabbed them in. . . . Was it your hand?"—examining that limb of Peter's.

"It was mine all right," Peter said. "I wanted to bring those bags along if possible, but I would have come without them rather than miss the train."

"How thrilling! Where did you see us first?"

"Don't you remember how a motor-trolley almost ran your father down? I was the person who pulled him away."

"Oh, yes—and it smashed his wine-bottle, poor Daddy! Peter—were you the 'Monsieur Anglais' who sent the new bottle?"

"Well," Peter said, "he looked so pathetic when he found it was smashed. You see, I had more than one!"

"It was sweet of you, Peter. I remember Daddy tasted it and said a very nice man had sent him that wine."

"Did he? Bless him! Yes, and I came and stood in your corridor almost all night trying to remember where I had seen him before."

"Peter! It's like a detective-story! Was it you that said 'Cambridge' out aloud? Daddy declared somebody did."

"Somebody did—and I was the somebody! It was like suddenly seeing Jacob's Ladder 'pitched between heaven and Charing Cross.'

You see, I had to have some excuse for tackling him, as I meant to do the very first chance that came."

"Oh," Adorée said, "how dreadful if you had been to Oxford instead!"

"Oh, you—*darling*!"

"Oh, and, Peter, do you remember the day we went to Nîmes?"

"When I forget that day, or any other I spent with you, I shall have forgotten most things! What about Nîmes—darling, darling?"

"Well, you were looking very depressed, and I asked you why, and you said you had lost a—a pump . . . that you had had a very queer sort of pump stolen in Paris. And you said you had seen the thief and run after him . . . and that he wouldn't be able to use the pump, and that was what worried you about it. Do you know, I stayed awake *hours* that night, wondering what you *could* mean! What did you mean, Peter?"

"I meant the absolute truth. A heart is a sort of pump, isn't it?—and I had had mine stolen in Paris. *You* stole it. You had it with you in Nîmes that very day. What was worrying me was, not losing the thing (I was glad beyond words about that), but that

I was afraid you wouldn't have any use for it. You *have* got some use for it, haven't you, beloved ?"

"It's a darling pump," Adorée said; "and such a big, strong, splendid one! It would blow up anything." She folded her hands on her breast as though she had it there.

"And have you really given me yours, Adorée ?" Peter said. "Oh, I cannot quite believe it! It's too wonderful if you have."

"Well, I—have. So there! But you must have had yours on your sleeve since I took it off you so easily!"

"I had the bally thing in a cast-iron safe," Peter declared. "And that safe was in another safe, and that other was in yet another! What's more, old Crabstick had sealed the whole thing up with spells and incantations, so that there was only one girl in all the world who could possibly have got in at it!"

"Nice old Crabstick!"

"Yes, she's not a bad old sort in her way. Adorée ?"

"Yes, Peter ?"

"*Do* you love me, Adorée ?"

"I—love you, Peter."

The Provençal stars twinkled and winked.

3.

"Peter?"

"Darling?"

"Oh—Peter!"

"What is it, my sweetheart?"

"Isn't that Daddy sitting all alone there on the pavement? He's got an unlighted cigarette and—and an empty match-box in his hand! Oh, Peter, I'm going to—cry!"

"Loveliest and sweetest! . . . Indeed you are not. Look, I've got heaps of matches. We'll have him lit up in no time—and we'll have some Châteauneuf: not you, but Daddy! Don't you be afraid he is going to be left lonely and forlorn, because he isn't. Let's go and tell him."

"Do you think he will mind awfully?"

"I am quite sure he will not. You're going to be happy, aren't you, Adorable and Adored? . . . He wants you to be happy."

"Yes, but—poor Daddy! . . ."

"Now, don't start again: because for every tear I see I shall have to give you a thousand kisses!"

"A whole thousand?"

"A whole thousand!"

"Do I look an awful sight, Peter? Am I fit to go into the street?"

"The street—even that street—is not fit for you to go into! You look like—a snowdrop just come up to the—song of the blackbird when the—rime is melting on the grass under the spring sun. You look like a little new shining star. You look like . . . God knows what you look like, you little Queen of all the World! God made you, and I expect Omnipotence could describe you. . . . It is a task far beyond music and poetry! Adorée, Adorée, I'll make you so happy. And we'll make your Daddy so happy. I am so happy myself—if the sun went out, I believe I'd do instead!"

"And if the moon went out, I would be a moon to your shining."

"Darling, darling, darling! Oh, Adorée, Adorée, Adorée! Just once again!"

"Just once, then."

"Just twice?"

"Well—just twice!"

"Three times for luck?"

"Now, that's naughty! No, you'll spoil the luck if you do it again. Come on: I'll race you to Daddy."

"What is the prize if I win?"

"There isn't a prize if *you* win! But if I win, *perhaps* you can do it again before we go in to-night—if we can find a dark place!"

Peter lost the race handsomely.

4.

"Well, my child," said the Professor, as Adorée, heedless of the strolling world, threw her arms around his neck, "from what far country do you come so hot of foot, and what tidings do you bring? Ah, Peter, my dear boy. . . . What?—a match at last?"

Peter held the flame to the Professor's cigarette.

"A match at last, sir!" he said.

"All things come to him that waits," remarked the Professor. "One might make a pretty play of words, don't you think," he added, "on the match which produces the flame and the flame which produces the match?"

"Daddy!" Adorée cried, pulling her father's face round towards her own; "do you know anything?"

"I am thought to do so, my dear," returned the Professor, "and by men whose judgment it were temerity to despise. At least I can

claim to read open books fairly readily, and I am tolerably conversant with the rules of simple arithmetic. I can put two and two together, and I know the inevitable result of subtracting one from three for however short a time. For myself," he went on, smiling at the two, "I cannot multiply now, and I will own that Division daunts me: Long Division would be altogether too much for me, I fear. But I shall learn—I shall learn."

"Daddy, my darling little old Daddy," Adorée cried, "I won't have you back in the kindergarten! He shan't learn even Short Division, shall he, Peter?"

"The sum," Peter said, "appears to me to be one of Simple Addition. It is a case of adding one to two, or of adding two to one: the result in either case is three. Subtraction is what I personally won't hear of, and Division is out of the question."

"And if there was ever any Multiplication," Adorée whispered in her father's ear, "you know you would just love it, Daddy darling—and we would call it after you."

"Life has played me many tricks in my time," the Professor said, fondling Adorée's head, "but the most persistent is certainly its

refusal of a grievance. Most men have a grievance, and seem to thrive under it; but somehow one seems never to come my way. Here I bring my only child and daughter to Provence to show her its wonders and beauties, and what must she do but pick on something adventitious and extra-Provençal which she declares her unwillingness ever to let go! The same result might have been achieved, and at much less cost, by staying quietly at home. Surely a man who had the trick of it might make a colourable grievance out of this; yet for the life of me I cannot see that it is anything but very natural, right and proper."

"God so do unto me, and more," Peter muttered to himself, "as I do unto you, sir!"

"And as for grievances, Daddy darling," Adorée said, "we can safely leave that department to Aunt Isabel. The reason why you never had one, sweetest, is because Aunt Isabel (she is Daddy's elder sister, Peter) made a corner in the family stock! Do you know, Peter, even when we have been married for twenty years, and fearfully happy all the time, Aunt Isabel will still speak of it as a 'very sad thing'—just because we met on our own out here, with only Daddy, and weren't stodgily

introduced by our female relatives on both sides! By the way, Petrarca dear, what are you? I mean, how do you make the money you're proposing to marry me on? You know, I'm rather expensive."

"Why, bless my soul, yes!" exclaimed the Professor. "I am indeed prettily cast for my part! What are you, my dear boy—as regards this world of rates and taxes in which somebody else as a rule gets most of our being?"

"What do you think I am?" Peter said, beckoning at the same time to the waiter, who had quite made up his mind that the party was mad, to judge, at least, by his expressive and repeated shrugs in its direction. "And am I rich or poor? *Garçon*," he added to the waiter, "*Châteauneuf-des-Papes, le plus bon que vous en avez!*"

"I don't think you're a French scholar," Adorée said happily. "And I am so glad, because there will be something I can do better than you."

"And if you are poor," ruminated the Professor, "then the way you have hired cars in this country is little short of scandalous."

"You aren't a clergyman in disguise, I do hope," Adorée said. "And I don't think

you're a doctor, because if you were you wouldn't have been so frightened when I was a bit—you know what!"

"Many worthy men get a living from the Law," the Professor said: "policemen, for instance, and Lord Chancellors. You might, of course, be a banker or broker, but why look on the dark side of things?"

"I ask you, sir, do I look like a banker or broker?"

"I don't think I know what brokers do look like," the Professor said; "but some bankers are personable men enough. You have been a soldier. . . . You are not still in the Army, I suppose?"

"No, sir."

"This is like the game of 'Clumps,'" Adorée said, "that one used to play at children's parties. (Did you ever play it, Peter? What a sweet little boy you must have been!) You must tell us if we are hot or cold, will you?"

"Yes (darling!)."

"Oh," cried the Professor, in the voice of one whom a great fear superimpends; "you are not, are you, a Member of Parliament? Not for a moment, my dear boy, that I suspect you of this, or that you have at all the appearance

of it; but one is so dreadfully afraid that you might have got 'put up' in your extreme youth and have found yourself unable as yet to get put down. Tell us honestly, my dear boy, if this thing has befallen you; confident that we shall pity, not condemn."

"This is Daddy's 'King Charles's Head,'" Adorée whispered to Peter. "Why are you so down on Members of Parliament, Daddy?" she added aloud.

"My dear," said the Professor, preparing to enjoy a canter on his favourite hobby-horse, "only consider the phraseology which attaches to this unfortunate class of men, and then do not ask me! They are first of all 'put up'—an expression which reeks of jobbery; they then for a very short time 'stand'—propped up by agents and other hirelings; they have a 'platform'—which suggests the mountebank character of their whole performance; and finally, if they are successful, they are paid to 'sit.' The least noble part of man is that with which they chiefly labour; for, when they 'rise,' they cease for the time being to have any significance at all. Would you wish to have a husband who 'sits'?—and what sort of a character must that be which is expressed

and gratified by the mere act of *sitting*? One respects a *hen* for sitting, because of her egg—and one puts up with her cackle; but what are we to say of men who sit and cackle, and yet produce no egg?"

"Believe me, sir," Peter assured the Professor, "I have nothing whatever to do with politics. I will stand on my head in the open street before I become a professional wearer out of trousers!"

"Then," said the Professor, lighting his pipe and retiring from the game, "be what you will, my dear boy; I really do not care. Almost every other trade and occupation has some excuse to offer for itself: for this alone, though it lives by talking, there is nothing to be said at all."

"The two M.P.'s I know," Adorée said, "are awfully sweet. They are both called 'Conservatives,' but they disagree on every single thing on earth!"

"They vote together, I dare say," said the Professor, gloomily.

"Oh well, there are only two lobbies, aren't there? I don't see what else they could do."

"Bother politicians!" Peter said. "You haven't found out what I am yet, Adorée!"

"Neither I have. But I will. Don't you dare to tell me: I can see you're dying to! Now, whatever can you be? I'm sure you're something sweet. You don't write, do you?"

"Not unless I want to, thank God! You said you were sure I was something sweet, and then you go and ask me if I write!"

"Aren't authors rather sweet?"

"Now, I put it to you—are they?"

"Poets are, rather, I think."

"Don't let a modern one hear you saying so! They particularly pride themselves on not being sweet."

"But have I been hot at all yet?" Adorée asked. "Yes? When?"

"When you said I was something sweet."

"Don't be silly."

"But I mean it! I am something sweet."

"Something *sweet*? How hard! You're not a confectioner, are you?"

"Not exactly: but there wouldn't be any confectioners but for my father and my uncle and me!"

"Daddy, what *can* he be? *How* wouldn't there be any confectioners?"

"Because they would have nothing to confect with."

"How *thrilling*! Are you a sort of merchant?"

"My father is," Peter said; "and it pleases the dear old gentleman to call me his junior partner. We also import very choice wines, sir"—to the Professor—"for the express behoof of the elect."

"My dear Peter," said the Professor, "I was sure you followed some noble calling, but I was unprepared for anything on this scale. Have you a price-list?"

"Not for you, sir. But I have a cask of a very special Burgundy which I am instructing the firm to send to your address in Cambridge."

The Professor, whom words failed, could only press his prospective son-in-law warmly by the hand.

"In fact," Peter went on, "I am supposed to be in France at the moment in order to study the different wines. I am afraid I've rather neglected it, however."

"Don't do that, my boy," the Professor urged him earnestly. "Study them closely: they will well repay application."

"But wine is only part of what you do, isn't it?" Adorée said.

"It is a part which can hardly but be greater

than the whole!" the Professor was of opinion. "Though I have no doubt," he added, "that Peter's worthy father (to whose acquaintance I look forward) is connected with some rare and delightful merchandise."

"Children think so, sir! There, Adorée: there is a hint for you!"

"You don't make toys, do you? Oh, how I wish you did!"

"Well," Peter said, "a certain sort of perishable toy is made out of what we provide. Without my father and me and the rest of the noble army, men and boys, a big bit of the joy of childhood would be taken clean away!"

"I said you had a fairy-tale sort of mind," Adorée exclaimed; "and you seem to have a fairy-tale business too! Oh, it *is* like 'Clumps'! Don't you dare tell me! What do children like, besides toys? . . . Oh, I know! Do you make sweets?"

"Well, practically," Peter said: "at least, my uncle's branch of the business does, and I have a share in that too. But my father and I are the source and fountain whence all these tributaries proceed!"

"*Peter!* How *wonderful*! Fancy being the source and fountain whence all cakes and

sweets proceed! Will your uncle send me some sweets when Daddy gets his wine ?"

"Well, if you want to know," Peter said, "a very large consignment of the firm's finest efforts ought to reach you here, about to-morrow. I wrote to my uncle personally about it, and—I do hope you won't mind—I told him why I wanted them; so, as he is a perfectly splendid old boy, I should think something really exceptional will land up."

"Oh, Peter, how utterly glorious! Fancy having an uncle who *is* chocolates! Oh, I shall love your uncle—and your father. Is your mother nice too ?"

"She is made of sweetness," Peter declared. "She is the very best woman for a sugar-merchant's wife that ever . . . Oh, Lord!" he broke off; "I've gone and given the show away!"

"So you are a sugar-merchant!"

"Yes: a poor but honest sugar-merchant! We have a rather large business throughout the family, and I am a sort of Junior Partner all round. It is all connected with sugar. My own contribution was the Wine Department, and there I am boss. Will you mind being a sugar-merchant's wife ?"

"Peter! If I'd been able to choose, I couldn't have imagined anything half so lovely! Will your father let me go to the warehouse and *see* the sugar: huge quantities of it?"

"I should just think he will! You shall have the run of the whole place. The dear old man is pining for a daughter-in-law, and he'll absolutely adore you. As who wouldn't!"

"Oh, Daddy, just imagine it!" Adorée cried, hugging her father rapturously. "Boatloads and boatloads of sugar and wine, and all belonging to Peter! And then his duck of an uncle turning it into sweets! Oh, but it's too heavenly. . . . I didn't know people could be such glorious things! It reminds me of that nursery-rhyme I used to think so thrilling. . . .

> "A little ship a-sailing,
> A-sailing on the sea;
> And it is richly laden
> With pretty things for me!"

It used to make me almost cry, that poem; because I thought it was so kind of somebody. But I never thought it would come true!"

"Well, it is going to come true," Peter said, sturdily. "Every single ship that belongs to me is coming in laden through and through

with pretty things for the prettiest girl in all the world."

"I must go in," said the Professor, feeling himself for the moment *de trop*. "You will probably like to linger in the garden for a short time. . . . A delightful evening, to be sure! Well, Peter, my very dear boy, I am entirely satisfied: I cannot imagine anything I would sooner have my son-in-law be than a merchant such as you. We can most of us look after our own religion, and politics we should be better without; but the man who imports sugar *and wine* is a public benefactor indeed! May your married life be as sweet and useful as your business is! I think it will be."

Peter wrung the Professor's extended hand.

"Thank you, sir—and God bless you," he said.

The Professor left them, whistling—rather unsteadily and a little out of tune:

> "It was a lover and his lass,
> Heigh-ho, sing heigh-ho. . . ."

Peter and Adorée sought the garden, the ivy-dusk and pale oleander flowers.

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